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FIGHTS FOR THE FLAG.¹

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AUTHOR OF 'DEEDS THAT WON THE EMPIRE.'

56 What is the flag of England? Winds of the world declare.—KIPLING.

I.²

SIR JOHN MOORE AT CORUNNA.

JANUARY 16TH, 1809.

Not a drum was heard, not a funeral note,
As his corpse to the rampart we hurried;
Not a soldier discharged his farewell shot
O'er the grave where our hero we buried.

We buried him darkly at dead of night,
The sods with our bayonets turning;
By the struggling moonbeam's misty light,
And the lantern dimly burning.

Slowly and sadly we laid him down,
From the field of his fame fresh and gory;
We carved not a line, and we raised not a stone—
But we left him alone with his glory.—WOLFE.

'As to the English armies, I will chase them from the Peninsula!' Into that sentence, spoken to a great assemblage of the notables of Spain at Charmartin, Napoleon compressed the wrathful

¹ [A series of studies, including the present article, have appeared under the above title in Australian publications. They will now appeal for the first time to the reading public at home as a gallery of battle pictures throughout the months of the current year.—ED. *Cornhill*.]

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purpose which led to the fierce, swift, sure, and bloody campaign ended at Corunna.

It may be admitted that, at that particular moment, Napoleon had good reason for turning in warlike wrath upon the British. Some two months before, in an address to his armies, Napoleon wrote: 'Soldiers, I have need of you. The hideous presence of the leopard contaminates the Peninsula of Spain and Portugal. In terror he must fly before you. Let us bear our triumphal eagles to the pillars of Hercules!' In an address, too, published in the '*Moniteur*' of October 26, 1808, Napoleon wrote: 'In a few days I shall set out to place myself at the head of my army; shall crown at Madrid the King of Spain, and plant my eagles on the towers of Lisbon.' Napoleon, in a word, was determined to grasp 'the Spanish nettle.' French arms had not prospered in the Peninsula. The Emperor's marshals were in nominal possession of the country; but one French force had been beaten, and had surrendered at Baylen; and Vimieiro, won by British bayonets, had driven the French eagles out of Portugal. Napoleon, taking advantage of the pause in the great wars of the Continent, which followed the conference at Erfurt, determined to overthrow all opposition in the Peninsula, as with the stroke of a thunderbolt.

Some 70,000 Spanish soldiers were in arms against him. But they were scattered along the line of the Ebro, over a distance of 200 miles, and under three independent commanders. They were badly armed and worse drilled. Their generals had no warlike knowledge, and hated each other almost more than they hated the French. Wild ravines and swift and bridgeless rivers broke these forces up into disconnected fragments. Napoleon himself years afterwards, at St. Helena, in a spasm of bitter frankness, said, 'The Spanish ulcer destroyed me;' and British statesmen, in some dim, blundering fashion, realising what an entanglement Spain might prove to Napoleon, had begun to feed the war in Spain. But their methods were of almost incredible stupidity. In the early days of November, 1808, there were 30,000 British troops in Spain; but they were broken up into three independent divisions, separated by nearly a hundred miles from each other, without any common base, and in touch neither with each other nor with the Spanish armies. The three British divisions, in brief, and the three Spanish armies—not 100,000 strong taken altogether—were scattered, like fragments from some exploded planet, across

the north of Spain, from the Asturian mountains to Saragossa. No one brain shaped their plans; no single will controlled them.

And upon this military chain, of which each link was already broken, Napoleon suddenly poured, like a tempest, the whole warlike strength of France. All through the month of October he was hurrying through the wet passes of the Eastern and Western Pyrenees his choicest troops, the fierce warriors who had struck down one after another the great Powers of the Continent, the veterans of Jena and Austerlitz and Friedland. The eight corps which formed the army now sweeping like a deluge through the Pyrenees were under the command of generals into the syllables of whose very names the echoes of a hundred victories were packed: Soult and Lannes, Mortier and Ney, St. Cyr and Bessières. And the fiercest and most splendid intellect ever employed in the service of war since the days of Hannibal—that of Napoleon himself—governed the whole movement. For nearly four weeks the road from Bayonne to Vittoria was crowded with infantry and cavalry and guns. The Imperial Guard itself, with the halo of a hundred victories on its bayonets, formed part of the great host pouring southward into Spain.

As the French forces deployed from the passes they formed a mighty host more than 300,000 strong, of whom 40,000 were cavalry, while in equipment, in discipline, in martial ardour, in that gay and reckless valour which is the note of the French character, they formed one of the most terrible fighting machines known to history.

There is no space to describe here the sudden and terrible fashion in which the tempestuous strategy of Napoleon struck down the Spanish forces. Napoleon swept over them, in fact, with something of the breathless speed and resistless fury of a tropical whirlwind. The Emperor reached Bayonne on November 3; within three weeks three Spanish armies were not so much overthrown as annihilated. They had been smitten at Espinosa, at Burgos, at Tudela; and scattered fugitives, without artillery, supplies, or ammunition, had taken refuge in the rugged mountains at the head waters of the Ebro, or amongst the Guadarrama hills, or behind the walls of Saragossa. On December 2 the cavalry of the French Guard were gathered like a threatening cloud on the hills which overlook Madrid from the north-west; and on December 4 the French eagles flew over Retiro, and Madrid was captured!

Spain lay, in a word, at Napoleon's mercy. His cavalry could sweep, almost without check, over the fertile southern provinces. On December 20 the sixth corps under Ney, the Imperial Guard, and the reserve, under the personal command of Napoleon, stood ready to begin that great triumphant march to the south-west, which was to end at Lisbon. The Imperial muster-roll showed at that moment that the French forces in Spain numbered more than 330,000 men, with 60,000 horses and 400 guns; and Spain itself was, in Sir John Moore's terse phrase, 'without generals, without armies, without a government.' What human force could arrest a strategy framed by what Napier calls 'the mightiest genius of 2,000 years,' and carried out by more than 300,000 of the finest soldiers of that period, with a glow of victory in their very blood?

It is a matter of sober history that the daring resolve of a single British soldier arrested the whole of Napoleon's designs, diverted the march of all his mighty and crowded battalions, and, in the darkest hour of its fortunes, saved Spain! 'I will sweep the English armies from the Peninsula,' said Napoleon, as, from under the walls of Madrid, he set out on what he meant to be the swiftest and most dazzling campaign of his life. Terrible is the irony of history! As a matter of fact, the British armies chased the French from the Peninsula, and in turn poured through the passes of the Pyrenees on France; and defeat in Spain finally overthrew Napoleon's throne. 'It was the Spanish ulcer,' as he himself said, in wrathful anguish, 'that destroyed me.' But there would have been no 'Spanish ulcer'—there might have been no storming of Badajos, no Vittoria, no Salamanca, and perhaps no Waterloo, and no St. Helena—if, at the moment when Napoleon was about to set out on his march to Lisbon at the head of what seemed resistless forces, Sir John Moore, with 20,000 British soldiers, had not made that famous march—a thrust as with the point of a glittering rapier at Napoleon's flank—which threatened the Emperor's communications. That audacious stroke made him stay his march through Spain—a march never to be resumed—while he swung round to crush the tiny but daring foe that menaced him.

Moore's strategy was, indeed, of a singularly daring quality. The Spanish armies with whom he was directed to co-operate, had simply vanished, like a cluster of eddy wind-driven leaves before a tempest. Napoleon, at the head of an apparently overwhelming force, was about to sweep over the rich provinces to

the south, and the march of his victorious columns would not cease till their feet were wet with the waves of the Atlantic beyond Lisbon. Moore, by this time, had partially concentrated the scattered divisions of the British Army, but his total force numbered not more than 26,000 men, of which 2,000 were cavalry, with some sixty guns. Moore's position was in the angle that forms the north-west shoulder, so to speak, of Spain, on Napoleon's right flank. Napoleon never doubted that Moore, when he learned the disasters which had overtaken the Spanish armies, and knew the resistless tide of war which was about to sweep across Spain to Lisbon, would instantly fall back to Corunna, or Vigo, on the sea coast, and take ship to Lisbon. He would thus pluck his army out of deadly peril, and transport it south in readiness to meet Napoleon in front of Lisbon; if, indeed, the British Government had the courage to face the French standards there.

Moore himself, at first, resolved on that plan, but a bolder strategy took shape in his brain. He had the power of striking at Napoleon's communications with France. If he thrust boldly eastward, and menaced Napoleon's communications on the side of Burgos, he made no doubt that the Emperor would instantly swing round upon him, and a force outnumbering his by ten to one, and urged by the fiery genius of the greatest soldier of the century, would bear down upon him like a tempest. But Moore believed that he could strike at Napoleon's communications sufficiently to arrest the southward march of his columns, and so secure for Spain a breathing space, and yet pluck back his tiny army in safety before Napoleon's counter-stroke could crush it. He would draw, that is, Napoleon's whole power upon himself, would thrust his head, so to speak, into the lion's very jaws, and yet cheat the lion's fury. As Napier puts it, he saw the peril for his own army. He knew that 'it must glide along the edge of a precipice: must cross a gulf on a rotten plank; but he also knew the martial quality of his soldiers, felt the pulsation of his own genius; and, the object being worth the deed, he dared essay it even against Napoleon.'

Moore was indeed a great soldier, and with better fortune might have anticipated and outshone even the fame of Wellington. He was of Scottish birth, and perhaps was the very finest soldier that martial race has in modern times produced. He had a vivid, commanding personality that made him a sort of king amongst men. His eyes were dark and searching, and were set beneath a

forehead of singular breadth and aspect of power. His mouth had a womanly sweetness about it, while the curve of his chin and the general contour of his face gave an extraordinary expression of energy. He lacked, perhaps, that iron quality of blood and will which augmented Wellington's capacity as a general, while it won for him an unpleasant reputation for cold-bloodedness as a friend. Moore, in fact, had a strain of womanly sweetness in him that made him adored by his own circle. He was generous, high-minded, with a passionate scorn of base things and of base men—a quality which made mean men hate him, and evil men afraid of him. Of his signal capacity for war there is no room to doubt. His ideal of soldiership was very noble, and he had the art of stamping it on all those around him. 'No man with a spark of enthusiasm,' says Charles Napier, afterwards the conqueror of Scinde, 'could resist the influence of Moore's great aspirations, his fine presence, his ardent penetrating genius.' Moore did more to create the modern British soldier than any other British general that can be named. At Shorncliffe Camp three regiments—the 43rd, the 52nd, and the Rifles—were under his hands. Up to that point they were commonplace regiments with no gleam of special fame about them. Moore so kindled and fashioned them that afterwards, as Wellington's famous Light Division, they were found to be 'soldiers unsurpassable, perhaps never equalled.' From the officers of these three regiments, who felt the breath of Moore's quickening genius, there came a longer list of notable men than has ever been yielded by any other three regiments of any service in the world. Napier says that in the list were four who afterwards commanded armies—three being celebrated as conquerors—above ninety who attained the rank of field officer; sixteen governors of colonies, many generals who commanded districts, &c., &c. Half-a-dozen Moores, in fact, might well have transmuted to gold the whole clay of the British army!

Napoleon himself recognised Moore's genius, when he learnt that the British commander, instead of falling back to the sea-coast, was actually striking at his communications. 'Moore,' he said, 'is the only general now fit to contend with me; I shall advance against him in person.'

Nothing could surpass the speed and energy with which Napoleon instantly changed his plans, arrested the southward march of his columns, and swung round on his daring foe. Moore, on December 23, had reached Carrion, purposing to leap on Soult, who held Saldaña. To beat Soult, however, was a secondary

object. His real purpose was to draw Napoleon from the south, and, as Napier expresses it, 'it behoved the man to be alert who interposed between the lion and his prey.' On December 19, 60,000 men and 150 guns were reviewed by Napoleon at the gates of Madrid, and were just being launched on that long march which was to end at Lisbon. The French light cavalry were already riding on the borders of Andalusia, the first French corps was holding Toledo. But on December 21, Napoleon heard of Moore's daring march, and within twenty-four hours his southward-moving columns were all arrested; within forty-eight hours 50,000 French troops were at the foot of the Guadarrama hills, the range to the north-west of Madrid, across which Napoleon must lead his troops to cut off Moore from the sea-coast.

It was winter-time. The passes were choked with snow, the cliffs were slippery with ice. Furious tempests, heavy with rain or sword-edged with sleet, howled through the ravines. Twelve hours' toil left the half-frozen French columns still on the Madrid side of the mountain range, and the generals reported the passage 'impossible.' The leader who had crossed the St. Bernard, however, was not to be stopped by Spanish hills and snows. Napoleon, with his staff, joined the advance-guard, and, with fiery gestures and fiery speech, urged on the soldiers. Many men and many beasts perished; the struggle across the snow-filled passes lasted for two days. But Napoleon's vehemence swept all before it, and on the 24th the army had reached Villacastin, sixty miles from Madrid. On the 26th, Napoleon was at Tordesillas with the Guard, and he wrote to Soult: 'Our cavalry scouts are already at Bena-vente. If the English pass to-day in their position, they are lost.'

Napoleon, in fact, was paying back Moore with his own tactics. The British general had only to loiter on the Esla for twelve hours longer, and Napoleon would have swept like a whirlwind across his communications; and, betwixt Soult and Napoleon, the British army would have been crushed like a nut betwixt the hammer and the anvil. The speed of Napoleon's march, too, had been little less than marvellous. In the depth of winter he had executed a march of 200 miles with 50,000 men, with the energy, and something of the speed, of a thunderbolt. On December 22 he was at Madrid; on the 28th he was at Villalpando, having performed a march on bad roads, and in wild weather, of 164 miles in six days.

And yet Moore evaded him! When Napoleon reached Valdaras, the British were across the Esla; but so nicely did

Moore time his movements, and with such daring did he hold on to his position in front of the converging French armies, to the very last moment, that Napoleon only missed his stroke by twelve hours, and the French cavalry scouts cut off some of the British baggage as it crossed the Esla!

Nor did Moore, indeed, begin his retreat without a brisk counter-stroke on his too eager pursuers. Thus, at Mayorga, Paget, who commanded the British cavalry, and was watching Soult, was cut off from the main body of the British by a sort of horn of cavalry thrown out from Napoleon's columns. The force falling back before Soult, that is, found solid squadrons of French horse drawn up on a hill, wet with rain, and thick with snow, on the line of its retreat. Paget led two squadrons of the 10th Hussars straight up the hill. It was stiff riding up the wet slope, and Paget halted his squadrons a few yards from the summit to give them breathing time, and then led them furiously at the enemy. With such daring did the Hussars drive their charge home that the French cavalry were smitten into fragments, and more than 100 captured. The British cavalry, it may be explained, had been for twelve days in almost hourly combat with the French outposts, and had established such a superiority over their enemies that they rode cheerfully at any odds, with an exultant certainty of success!

Napoleon urged his pursuit with amazing energy till he reached Astorga on January 1. His vehement will carried his troops the whole distance, from Benavente to Astorga, a distance of over thirty miles, during the brief span of a single winter's day. An icy rain beat upon the troops during the whole day, and no less than five times the infantry had to strip, and wade through the rain-swollen and snow-chilled streams. And yet they never halted. But, eagerly as Napoleon pressed on, Moore still outmarched and evaded him. At Astorga, Soult joined Napoleon, and 70,000 French infantry, 10,000 cavalry, and 200 guns were thus assembled under one command. It was an amazing proof of Napoleon's energy that, in the brief space of seven days, he should thus have flung on Moore so mighty a force. Napoleon, to quote Napier, 'had transported 50,000 men from Madrid to Astorga in less time than a Spanish courier would have taken to travel the same distance.' But it was also a justification of Moore's strategy that he had thus diverted the very flower of Napoleon's forces from their march southward, to the north-west corner of Spain.

At Astorga, Napoleon was overtaken by a courier with despatches. He was galloping with the advanced posts on Moore's track, when the courier overtook him. He dismounted, ordered a bivouac fire to be lit, and cast himself down on the ground beside it to read his despatches. The snow fell heavily upon him as he read, but left him unmoved. His despatches told the Emperor that Austria had joined the league of his enemies, and that France was menaced. Napoleon's decision was swift and instant. He left Soult and Ney, with 60,000 men, to push Moore back to the sea, and, if possible, destroy him. He turned the faces of the Imperial Guard once more towards the Pyrenees, and himself rode at furious speed, and almost without escort, to Paris.

Soult, the ablest of Napoleon's marshals, pressed hard on Moore's tracks, Ney marching by a parallel route and endeavouring to turn Moore's flank. The three armies, pursuers and pursued, passed through the mountains of Galicia; but Moore, riding always with his rear-guard, kept a front of steel against his enemies, and continually evaded them.

His troops were young and inexperienced, and British soldiers, at their best, do not shine in retreat. Discipline is apt to vanish. The men grow sulky and desperate. The ordered battalions, somehow, dissolve into reckless units. And it cannot be denied that in the speed and hardship of Moore's retreat, with inexperienced officers and raw troops, the British army went sadly to pieces. The rear-guard, it is true, on which perpetual combat acted as a tonic, kept magnificently together. Discipline in it was perfect, and, as a matter of fact, it suffered less loss than the main body. For twelve days, says Napier, these hardy soldiers had covered the retreat, during which time they traversed 80 miles of road in two marches, passed several nights under arms in the snow of the mountains, and were seven times engaged. Yet they lost fewer men than any other division in the army! At Lugo, on January 7, Moore halted, and offered battle to his pursuers, and that gallant challenge, as with a touch of magic, restored discipline and cheerfulness to the British army. The stragglers, as by an electric shock, were transfigured once more into soldiers. Grumbling was silenced; battalions grew close-packed and orderly. The British soldier, at his worst, grows cheerful at the prospect of a fight, while a retreat is hateful to him. Wellington's veterans, in their famous retreat from Burgos two years afterwards, did no better than Moore's young soldiers.

Soult, however, would not accept Moore's challenge of battle, and the retreat was resumed, and the pursuit urged afresh. On January 11 Corunna was reached. Moore's plan was to embark at Corunna and carry his troops to Cadiz, there to assist the Spaniards in defending the southern provinces. But when the troops reached the summit of the hills that looked down on Corunna the bay was empty ! The transports were wind-bound at Vigo.

It was a marvellous retreat. Moore's marches, in all, extended over 500 miles. At one time he had no less than two great armies thundering in pursuit of him, Napoleon himself striking at his flank. Yet the English general never lost a gun, nor suffered his rear-guard to be broken ; and his total losses, in spite of the temporary breakdown of the discipline of his army, were not more than 4,000 men. His retreat, too, was marked with a hundred acts of daring. Again and again he turned on his pursuers, and sent their too eager squadrons staggering back with the vehemence of his counter-stroke. A charge of the 10th Hussars broke the Imperial Guard itself, slew 130, and took seventy prisoners, including their commander, General Lefebvre Desnouettes. At Villafranca, the French general, Colbert, one of Napoleon's favourite officers, was slain and his men roughly overthrown, when pressing too sharply on Moore's rear. At Valladolid, Major Otway, with some British dragoons, not only overthrew a French cavalry force much superior to his own, but took a colonel and more prisoners than he had men to guard.

As an example of the soldierly quality of the men who marched and fought under Moore, a single incident may be taken from Napier. At Castro Gonzalo, two privates of the 43rd, John Walton and Richard Jackson, were posted beyond the bridge with orders that, if a force of the enemy approached, one should fire and run back to give the alarm, the other stand firm. In the grey, bitter dawn, a squadron of French cavalry, who had crept up unperceived, dashed at the two men. Jackson fired and ran, as ordered, to give the alarm. A score of horsemen in a moment were round him, slashing at him as he ran. He received fourteen sabre cuts, but, staggering, and with uniform drenched in blood, he yet ran on and gave the alarm. Walton in turn, obeying his orders, stood at his post, a sturdy, red-coated figure, standing steadfast in a whirlwind of galloping horses and gleaming, hissing sword-strokes. Walton parried each flashing stroke as well as he could, and answered them, when possible, with a vengeful bayonet-thrust. The combat lasted for some breathless, desperate minutes ;

then, the British infantry coming running up, the French horsemen galloped off, leaving still Walton standing, with iron loyalty, at his post. His cap, his knapsack, his belt and musket were cut in a score of places, his bayonet was bent double, was bloody to the hilt, and notched like a saw, yet he himself was unhurt!

On January 11, as we have said, Moore reached Corunna, and faced swiftly round to meet his pursuers. He was twelve hours in advance of Soult, and the French general lingered till the 16th before joining in the shock of battle—a delay which was, in part, necessary to allow his straggling rear-guard to close up, but in part, also, it was due to a doubt as to what might be the result of closing on a foe so hardy and stubborn. Moore employed this breathing time in preparing for embarkation. He blew up on the 13th two outlying powder magazines; in one were piled 4,000 barrels of powder, and its explosion was like the crash of a volcano. The earth trembled for miles, a tidal wave rolled across the harbour, a column of smoke and dust, with flames leaping from its black flanks, rose slowly into the sky, and then burst, pouring a roaring tempest of stones and earth over a vast area, and destroying many lives.

Moore next shot all his foundered horses, to the mingled grief and wrath of his cavalry. The 15th Hussars alone brought 400 horses into Spain, and took thirty-one back to England! The horses, it seems, were ruined, not for want of shoes, but 'for want of hammers and nails to put them on.' Having embarked his dismounted cavalry, his stores, his wounded, his heavy artillery, and armed his men with new muskets, Moore quietly waited Soult's onfall. His force was only 14,000 strong, without cavalry, and with only nine six-pounders, and he could not occupy the true defence of Corunna, the great rocky range which runs at right angles to the Mero. He had to abandon this to the French, and content himself with holding an inferior ridge nearer the town.

Hope's division held the left of this ridge; Baird's the right. Paget's division was in reserve, covering the valley which swept round the western extremity of the ridge, and ran up to Corunna. Still further to the west Fraser's division guarded the main road to Corunna. Paget's division thrust forward a battalion to the lower ranges of the hills on the western side of the valley, and then stretched a line of skirmishers across the mouth of the valley itself. Soult thus could only cross the ridge by breaking through Hope's or Baird's division. If he came up the valley he would expose his flank to

Baird, and find his march barred by Paget. Moore, as a matter of fact, reckoned on his left and centre repulsing the main attack of the French; then Paget and Fraser would sweep up the valley and complete the French overthrow. Soult had 20,000 veteran troops and a strong artillery; and, with great skill, he planted eleven heavy guns on a rocky eminence on his left, whence they could search the whole right and centre of the British. He launched his attack in three columns—the strongest, under Mermet, being intended to carry the village of Elvina, which served as an outpost to the extreme British right, and then to sweep round the right flank of Moore's position.

The onfall of the French was swift and vehement. The eleven great guns from the crags poured a tempest of shot on the British ridge, the skirmishers of Mermet's column ran forward, and drove back the British pickets with a heavy fire, while the solid column, coming on at the double after them, carried the village.

Moore, with his swift soldierly glance, instantly saw that this was the pivot of the battle, and he galloped to the spot. The 50th and the 62nd were stationed here, and Charles Napier, who as senior Major commanded the 50th, has left a most vivid word-picture of Moore's bearing on the field of battle:—

I stood in front of my left wing on a knoll, from whence the greatest part of the field could be seen, and my pickets were fifty yards below, disputing the ground with the French skirmishers, but a heavy French column, which had descended the mountain at a run, was coming on behind with great rapidity, and shouting—"En avant, tue, tue, en avant, tue!" their cannon, at the same time, plunging from above, ploughed the ground, and tore our ranks. Suddenly I heard the gallop of horses, and, turning, saw Moore. He came at speed, and pulled up so sharp and close, he seemed to have alighted from the air, man and horse looking at the approaching foe with an intentness that seemed to concentrate all feeling in their eyes. The sudden stop of the animal—a cream-coloured one, with black tail and mane—had cast the latter streaming forward, its ears were pushed out like horns, while its eyes flashed fire, and it snorted loudly with expanded nostrils. My first thought was, it will be away like the wind; but then I looked at the rider, and the horse was forgotten. Thrown on its haunches, the animal came sliding and dashing the dirt up with its fore-feet, thus bending the General forward almost to its neck; but his head was thrown back, and his look more keenly piercing than I ever before saw it. He glanced to the right and left, and then fixed his eyes intently on the enemy's advancing column, at the same time grasping the reins with both his hands, and pressing the horse firmly with his knees; his body thus seemed to deal with the animal while his mind was intent on the enemy, and his aspect was one of searching intensesness beyond the power of words to describe. For a while he looked, and then galloped to the left, without uttering a word!

Moore's tactics were both daring and skilful. He swung round the 4th regiment, so as to smite with a flank fire that

section of the French column sweeping round his right. He ordered up Paget, and after him Fraser, so as to make a counter-stroke at the French left, and meanwhile he launched the 42nd and 50th against the French column which had carried the village in the front. Napier, who commanded the 50th, has painted a most graphic picture of the struggle. 'Clunes,' he said to the captain of the Grenadier company, 'take your Grenadiers and open the ball!' 'He stalked forward alone, like Goliath before the Philistines, for six feet five he was in height, and of proportionate bulk and strength; and thus the battle began on our side.' Napier sternly forbade any firing, and to prevent it, and to occupy the men's attention, made them slope and carry arms by word of command. 'Many of them,' he says, 'cried out "Major, let us fire!" "Not yet," was my answer.' The 42nd had checked a short distance from a wall, but Napier led his men right up to the wall, and then said, 'Do you see your enemies plainly enough to hit them?' 'Many voices shouted, "By — we do!" "Then blaze away," said I; and such a rolling fire broke out as I hardly ever heard since.' The wall was breast high. Napier, followed by the officers, leaped over, and called on the men to follow. About a hundred did so at once, and, finding the others not quick enough for his impatience, Napier leaped back, and holding a halberd horizontally pushed the men quickly over. He then leaped over himself, and the instant he did so five French soldiers suddenly rose from the ground, levelled their muskets at him, and fired! The muskets were so near as to almost touch him, but his orderly sergeant, running at his side, struck them up with his pike, and saved Napier's life.

Napier dressed his line; and, as he says, remembering the story of how the officers of the English guards at Fontenoy laid their swords over the men's firelocks to prevent them firing too high, he did the same with a halberd—a curious example of how one brave act, across a hundred years, will inspire another. How Napier, with the hope of carrying the great battery, afterwards led part of his regiment up a lane lined on either side by French infantry, and so turned into a mere track of fire; how some unhappy counter-order prevented the 50th supporting him, and how Napier himself was wounded and taken prisoner cannot be told here. The story will be found, related with inimitable fire and humour, in Napier's own life.

Meanwhile, at every point, the British were victorious. The Guards and the Black Watch carried the village; Baird and Hope

drove back with confusion and loss the columns that assailed them, and Moore, eagerly watching the whole line of battle from the right of his position, was about to hurl Paget, supported by Fraser, on the French left.

At that moment Moore was struck on the left breast by a cannon-ball, and dashed violently on the ground. It was a dreadful wound. The shoulder was smashed, the arm hung by a piece of skin, the ribs over the heart were stripped of flesh and broken, and the muscles that covered them hung in long rags. But Moore, absorbed in the great struggle before him, sat up in an instant, his eyes still eagerly watching Paget's advance. His staff gathered round him, and he was placed in a blanket, and some soldiers proceeded to carry him from the field. One of his staff, Hardinge, tried to unbuckle his sword, as the hilt was entangled in the strips of flesh hanging from his wound, but the dying soldier stopped him. 'I had rather,' he said, 'it should go out of the field with me!' One of his officers, taking courage from Moore's unshaken countenance, expressed a hope of his recovery. Moore looked steadfastly at his own shattered breast for an instant, and calmly answered, 'No, I feel that to be impossible.' Again and again, as they carried the dying general from the field, he made his bearers halt, and turn round, that he might watch the fight. It was the scene of Wolfe on the Heights of Abraham repeated! And the spectacle was such as might well gladden the eyes of Moore. On the left, and at the centre, the British were everywhere advancing. Paget's column was overthrowing everything before it in the valley.

Had Fraser's division, as Moore intended, been brought up and frankly thrown into the fight, it can hardly be doubted that Soult would have been not merely overthrown, but destroyed. His ammunition was almost exhausted. His troops were in the mood of retreat. The Mero, a fordless river, crossed by a single bridge, was in his rear. He had lost 3,000 men; the British less than 1,000; and the British, it may be added, were full of proud and eager courage.

But Moore was dying. Baird was severely wounded. The early winter night was creeping over the field of battle, and Hope, gallant soldier though he was, judged it prudent to stay his hand. Soult had been roughly driven back; the transports were crowding into the harbour. It was enough to have ended a long retreat with the halo of victory, and to have secured an undisturbed embarkation.

Meanwhile Moore had been carried into his quarters at Corunna. A much-attached servant stood with tears running down his face as the dying man was carried into the house. 'My friend,' said Moore, 'it is nothing!' Then, turning to a member of his staff, Colonel Anderson, he said, 'Anderson, you know I have always wished to die in this way. I hope my country will do me justice.' Only once his lips quivered, and his voice shook, as he said, 'Say to my mother—' and then stopped, while he struggled to regain composure. 'Stanhope,' he said, as his eye fell on his aide-de-camp's face, 'remember me to your sister'—the famous Hester Stanhope, Pitt's niece, to whom Moore was engaged. Life was fast and visibly sinking, but he said—'I feel myself so strong I fear I shall be long dying.'

But he was not: Death came swiftly, and almost painlessly. Wrapped in a soldier's cloak he was carried by the light of torches to a grave hastily dug in the citadel at Corunna; and far off to the south, as the sorrowing officers stood round the grave of their dead chief, could be heard from time to time the sound of Soult's guns, yet in sullen retreat. That scene is made immortal in Wolfe's noble lines:—

Few and short were the prayers we said,
And we spoke not a word of sorrow,
But we steadfastly gazed on the face that was dead,
And we bitterly thought of the morrow.

We thought as we hollowed his narrow bed,
And smoothed down his lonely pillow,
That the foe and the stranger would tread o'er his head,
And we far away on the billow.

As a matter of fact, Soult showed signal honour to the grave where Moore lies, and the monument he raised—afterwards enlarged—bears a brief but noble epitaph:—

JOHN MOORE,

LEADER OF THE ENGLISH ARMIES.

SLAIN IN BATTLE, 1809.

Borrow, in his 'Bible in Spain,' says that in the Spanish imagination strange legends gather round that lonely tomb. The peasants speak of it with awe. A great soldier of foreign speech and blood lies there. Great treasures, they whisper, were buried in it! Strange demons keep watch over it! 'Yes, even in Spain, immortality has already crowned the head of Moore—Spain, the land of oblivion, where the Guadalete flows.'

THE POETRY OF BYRON.

AN ANNIVERSARY STUDY.

LORD BYRON BORN JANUARY 22, 1788.

SOME short time ago it seemed probable that Byron's poetry, so long depreciated, would take its proper position. It cannot, however, be said that any real change in literary circles has as yet been felt towards the work of that great writer. For the present, then, we must be content to accept what I personally believe to be a temporary verdict. To sum up the opinion held by the literary world at the present time, one might say that the poetry of Byron was at its best excellent rhetoric, at its worst slipshod and theatrical doggerel; that there is no real feeling in his work, and no real sincerity. If such a judgment is to be allowed; if one is to say of Byron that his poetry is mere rhetoric, that he is slipshod, theatrical, and insincere, it would be mere futility to attempt to point out any redeeming feature whatsoever. In the present article, however, I entirely dissent from this judgment as a whole, though admitting that superficially much can be said for it. Let it be conceded at once that Byron is in no scientific sense a master of verse. He had evidently never studied, as many lesser modern men have done, the system of pauses, the value of an 'i' or an 'a.' Yet, this notwithstanding, is it possible to produce, in English literature, verse of so natural and yet excellent a quality as is to be found in 'Don Juan' and 'The Vision of Judgment'? Indeed so complete, in a sense, is Byron's mastery over verse that he appears now to sing, now to rave, now to talk with perfect metrical ease. I have no intention here of quoting the long and illustrious list of critics who have praised Byron; though, supposing that he were placed in the dock, it would be easy to see that the speeches for the defence would carry the verdict. It seems more to the purpose to quote from Byron himself in support of any judgment that may be given. I am aware that in quoting from Byron's poetry I am taking a somewhat unfair advantage, as very many literary men and women who perpetually sneer at him have never read any of his best verse. To take for a moment the contention that Byron's

verse is slipshod, and, in fact, not verse at all—is there any other poet in the whole range of English literature who could have written verse so perfect, so natural, so irresistible, as appears in the description of Satan's appearance at the bar of heaven to claim the soul of George III.? Let any unprejudiced reader read aloud the following verses, and then say whether any verse so light, so exact, and yet so strong, has been produced since the days of Elizabeth:—

While thus they spake, the angelic caravan,
Arriving like a rush of mighty wind,
Cleaving the fields of space, as doth some swan
Some silver stream (say Ganges, Nile, or Inde,
Or Thames or Tweed), and midst them an old man
With an old soul, and both extremely blind,
Halted before the gate, and in his shroud
Seated their fellow traveller on a cloud.

The whole of this verse, and especially the last two lines, shows consummate metrical ability. It is done, however, with the lightest possible touch. But with equal ease the poet makes in the next verse an ineffaceable and tragic impression.

But bringing up the rear of that bright host,
A spirit of a different aspect waved
His wings, like thunder-clouds above some coast
Whose barren beach with frequent wrecks is paved;
His brow was like the deep when tempest-tossed;
Fierce and unfathomable thoughts engraved
Eternal wrath on his immortal face,
And *where* he gazed, a gloom pervaded space.

This description, if not on so mighty a scale as that of Milton, is more direct and no less haunting.

In the next verse the poet, maintaining the grand note in the first two lines, descends without difficulty to the satiric in his description of the fright of St. Peter.

As he drew near, he gazed upon the gate
Ne'er to be entered more by him or sin,
With such a glance of supernatural hate
As made Saint Peter wish himself within;
He pattered with his keys at a great rate,
And sweated through his apostolic skin:
Of course his perspiration was but ichor,
Or some such other spiritual liquor.

All this verse is, in fact, written as easily as though the man were talking after supper; and yet, of its kind, of what supreme quality it is! One more stanza may be quoted from the same

poem, where the verse, without any effort, takes on a slower and more mournful cadence in the following splendid lines :

He and the sombre silent spirit met—
 They knew each other both for good and ill ;
 Such was their power that neither could forget
 His former friend and future foe ; but still
 There was a high, immortal, proud regret
 In either eye, as if 'twere less their will
 Than destiny to make the eternal years
 Their date of war, and their ' Champ Clos ' the spheres.

Is it possible to deny to verse of this kind, even from the most technical point of view, an incomparable ease and lightness together with a certain majesty and pathetic cadence ? ' The Vision of Judgment ' is undoubtedly Byron's greatest poem, and he by no means always writes at this height. But when it is said that he was not a master of verse, and that his rhythm is false and irregular, it is as well to disprove such assertions at once and finally. It may, however, be said, though it is nothing to the point, that Byron's sole gift was satire, and that in a satiric poem he wrote verse of which at other times he was incapable. Leaving then his satires for the moment, let us look at his more serious and tragic poems. Here is a passage from ' Manfred ' where the verse comes along with an intensity and fateful significance which is not to be denied. I apologise for quoting verse so well known as the following, but it disproves by its nature, force, and passion the cheap sneers which it is the custom to level at Byron.

Though thy slumber may be deep,
 Yet thy spirit shall not sleep ;
 There are shades which will not vanish,
 There are thoughts thou canst not banish ;
 By a power to thee unknown,
 Thou canst never be alone ;
 Thou art wrapt as with a shroud,
 Thou art gathered in a cloud ;
 And for ever shalt thou dwell
 In the spirit of this spell.

And a magic voice and verse
 Hath baptised thee with a curse ;
 And a spirit of the air
 Hath begirt thee with a snare
 In the wind there is a voice
 Shall forbid thee to rejoice
 And to thee shall Night deny
 All the quiet of her sky ;
 And the day shall have a sun
 That shall make thee wish it done.

Once more let any unprejudiced reader read this to himself, and say if he is not overcome by the spell and rush of the incantation. Or take the splendid fragment of 'Prometheus,' and especially the ensuing deep and funereal lines :

But baffled as thou wert from high,
Still in thy patient energy,
In the endurance and repulse
Of thine impenetrable spirit,
Which earth and heaven could not convulse,
A mighty lesson we inherit ;
Thou art a symbol and a sign
To mortals of their fate and force ;
Like thee, man is in part divine,
A troubled stream from a pure source ;
And man in portions can foresee
His own funereal destiny ;
His wretchedness and his resistance,
And his sad unallied existence ;

or, as an instance of classic force and restraint, take the two lines describing his own fate :

I have been cunning in my overthrow,
The careful pilot of my proper woe.

The little masters of modern verse look on the sonnet as one of the most exacting trials of craftsmanship. It would be interesting to know whether they would find it easy to produce so stately and so austere a sonnet as the one 'On Chillon.'

Eternal spirit of the chainless mind !
Brightest in dungeons, Liberty ! thou art ;
For there thy habitation is the heart—
The heart which love of thee alone can bind ;
And when thy sons to fetters are consigned—
To fetters and the damp vault's rayless gloom,
Their country conquers with their martyrdom,
And Freedom's fame finds wings on every wind.
Chillon ! thy prison is a holy place,
And thy sad floor an altar—for 'twas trod
Until his very steps have left a trace
Worn, as if thy cold pavement were a sod,
By Bonnivard ! May none those marks efface !
For they appeal from tyranny to God.

As a last instance of splendid and impetuous verse, the following lines from 'Mazeppa' might be quoted :

The earth gave way, the skies rolled round,
I seemed to sink upon the ground ;
But erred, for I was fastly bound.

My heart turned sick, my brain grew sore,
 And throbbed awhile, then beat no more :
 The skies spun like a mighty wheel ;
 I saw the trees like drunkards reel,
 And a slight flash sprang o'er my eyes,
 Which saw no further : he who dies
 Can die no more than then I died.

Space forbids further quotations to exhibit the varied and strenuous excellence of Byron's verse, now so much decried. But the character of the age in which we live is in itself sufficient to explain the depreciation of such a poet. We are not now, and have not been for many years, under the influence of any great world-movement, or any really strong spiritual vision. At such times, the poet and the critic, comparatively unstirred, bend all their energies towards technical perfection and the scientific study of verse. It is very far from the present writer's wish to decry any study so admirable and indeed so necessary ; but it is inevitable that in such an age a writer whose excellences are elemental, not technical, who convinces rather by energy and force than by elaborate and long-sought felicity, must undergo a period of detraction. Without intense study and an exquisite cultivation, literature must perish ; but it is necessary to point out that in the present age there is a danger of overpraising literary perfection and of underrating sheer force and natural energy. We have grown accustomed to the laboured felicities of Tennyson, the pensive perfections of Arnold, and the diffuse technicalities of Swinburne ; and we demand—in a way rightly—that no verse shall be given to the world that is hasty or ill-considered. There is, however, the greater peril of ignoring creative splendour while we look narrowly for metrical niceties. The other great charge hurled against Byron, besides the weak quality of his verse, is 'insincerity.' In the days when Mr. Swinburne was a poet and a critic, it is somewhat curious to recall that it was this very quality of sincerity for which he gave Byron credit. But the fact is that it is impossible to convince the average reader that a man may be superficially insincere, and at heart most sincere. That Byron loved to assume a melodramatic pose is undoubted ; that he frequently wrote verse which is on the face of it hollow and unconvincing, is unquestionable. Though he wrote the really pathetic 'Fare thee well' poem, it is very doubtful whether he had any real affection for Lady Byron. His feelings at the time were probably those of rage and spite against Society. Yet it is none the less true that in all that really matters—in the great and

deep questions of life—he was eminently courageous and sincere. In his faith in freedom he never for an instant wavered; in his hate of the England of his time, which was for the most part petty and hypocritical, he was steadfast enough: and in his portraits of himself, exaggerated and theatrical as they are, it is easy enough to see the genuine fire and the flame that leaps up from time to time in some splendid verse. One might almost stake Byron's reputation for sincerity on one single poem, a few verses of which it is difficult to avoid quoting.

The fire that on my bosom preys
Is lone as some volcanic isle;
No torch is kindled at its blaze—
A funeral pile!

The hope, the fear, the jealous care,
The exalted portion of the pain
And power of love I cannot share,
But wear the chain.

Awake! (not Greece—she is awake!)
Awake my spirit! Think through whom
Thy life-blood tracks its parent lake,
And then strike home!

Tread those reviving passions down,
Unworthy manhood!—unto thee
Indifferent should the smile or frown
Of beauty be.

If thou regrettest thy youth, why live?
The land of honourable death
Is here: up to the field, and give
Away thy breath!

If these verses have not a strong and sad sincerity in them, no verses have. But—to enlarge the field—was anything more 'sincere,' more truly and deeply felt, than the whole of that chief of English satires, 'The Vision of Judgment'? Is there a more sincere poem—in the artistic sense—than 'Don Juan'? Its frequent lapses, its immorality may be quarrelled with; but, both in truth of conception and in faithfulness of depiction, few poems can stand beside it. It is really time that this cant of 'insincerity,' as applied to Byron, was dismissed. In spite of self-deceptions, of tawdriness, and of a perfectly childish pretence, Byron remains perhaps the most sincere of all our poets. Having said something with regard to the chief charges made against this poetry, let us look for a moment at its excellences. Byron never went so deep as Wordsworth, never sang so purely as Shelley, had not that overpowering sense of the soul of beauty that we find in Keats; nor

had he the fine-wrought melody and dainty touch of Tennyson. But, if we are to regard range of power as a factor in reputation, where will Byron eventually stand? As a satirist alone, it would be absurd for one moment to compare any of the poets just named with him. And his satire is of the best kind—a mingling of the grotesque with the really tragic, a deep hatred and a deep love—disguised by a light and easy manner. Above all, his satire is poetry, and, at its best, poetry of a very high order. As a satirist, then, he stands quite unchallenged among modern poets. In a power of pictorial description, more especially in his sea-pieces, I know no modern poet who can pretend for a moment to stand by him. He does not probe the soul of Nature so deeply as others have done, but he can paint her with a freedom and a zest which few have approached. ‘Don Juan’ especially is full of such passages, which seem to actually bring the sea wind across the page and the lap of water into the ears. As a dramatic poet Byron has been much assailed, and from one point of view rightly enough. It is complained that he never drew any one but himself. This is true enough; but what is one to say of the personality which could so multiply and transform itself, which could always interest, and at other times fascinate and appal? Then though this inability to draw a variety of characters precludes him from taking rank as a great dramatist, still he grips ‘a situation,’ as they say on the stage, with singular power. An opportunity offers to compare him for once with Shakspeare. The scene where Macbeth compels the witches to unveil the future for him has a very near parallel in the scene where Manfred compels the demons to raise the phantom of Astarte.

Looking at these scenes side by side, it is possible to admit the superiority of Shakspeare, and yet impossible to deny to Byron the real dramatic gift.

Here is a part of the scene in ‘Manfred,’ in the Hall of Arimanes.

Nemesis. Great Arimanes, doth thy will avouch
The wishes of this mortal?

Ari. Yea.

Nem. Whom would'st thou
Uncharnel?

Man. One without a tomb.—Call up
Astarte.

Nem. Appear!—appear!—appear!
Who sent thee there requires thee here!

[*The Phantom of ASTARTE rises.*]

Man. Can this be death? there's bloom upon her cheek!
 But now I see it is no living hue,
 But a strange hectic—like the unnatural red
 Which Autumn plants upon the perished leaf.
 It is the same! Oh God! that I should dread
 To look upon the same—Astarte!—No,
 I cannot speak to her—but bid her speak—
 Forgive me or condemn me.

Nem. By the power which hath broken
 The grave which enthralled thee,
 Speak to him who hath spoken,
 Or those who have called thee!

Man. She is silent,
 And in that silence I am more than answered.

Nem. My power extends no further. Prince of air!
 It rests with thee alone—command her voice.

Ari. Spirit! obey this sceptre!

Nem. Silent still!
 She is not of our order, but belongs
 To the other powers. Mortal! thy quest is vain,
 And we are baffled also!

There is no space to quote the long passionate speech of Manfred; but the ending of the scene is full of reticence and power.

Phantom of Astarte. Manfred!

Man. Say on, say on—
 I live but in the sound—it is thy voice!

Phan. Manfred! to-morrow ends thine earthly ills.
 Farewell!

Man. Yet one word more—am I forgiven?

Phan. Farewell!

Man. Say, shall we meet again?

Phan. Farewell!

Man. One word for mercy! Say thou lovest me.

Phan. Manfred! [*The Spirit of ASTARTE disappears.*]

It will scarcely be denied that the scene just quoted makes a very real impression of terror and pity on the mind. Byron is not a great dramatist—he was too self-absorbed—but scenes in his dramas are impressive in the extreme. The death scene of 'Manfred' is also full of mystery and awe. Byron, then, though not a great dramatic writer, had undoubted dramatic power.

In the quality of pure imagination Byron cannot for one moment be ranked with the greatest of poets. At the same time he had a great gift of imagination, and of a high quality. But it is said that he is without imagination. In the drama of 'Cain' it is possible to compare Byron with Milton, as we have already compared him with Shakspeare. He will not of course stand such a test; but again he contrives, in his description of the

flight through space, to leave on the mind a deep sense of the illimitable.

Cain. How the lights recede !
Where fly we ?
Lucifer. To the world of phantoms, which
Are beings past, and shadows still to come.
Cain. But it grows dark, and dark—the stars are gone !
Luc. And yet thou seest.
Cain. 'Tis a fearful light !
No sun, no moon, no lights innumerable.
The very blue of the empurpled night
Fades to a dreary twilight ; yet I see
Huge dusky masses, but unlike the worlds
We were approaching, which, begirt with light,
Seemed full of life even when their atmosphere
Of light gave way, and showed them taking shapes
Unequal, of deep valleys and vast mountains ;
And some emitting sparks, and some displaying
Enormous liquid plains, and some begirt
With luminous belts, and floating moons which took,
Like them, the features of the earth :—instead,
All here seems dark and dreadful.
Luc. But distinct.
Thou seekest to behold death and dead things ?
Cain. I seek it not ; but as I know there are
Such, and that my sire's sin makes him and me,
And all that we inherit, liable
To such, I would behold at once, what I
Must one day see perforce.
Luc. Behold !
Cain. 'Tis darkness.
Luc. And so it shall be ever ; but we will
Unfold its gates !
Cain. Enormous vapours roll
Apart—what's this ?
Luc. Enter !
Cain. Can I return ?
Luc. Return ! Be sure. How else should death be peopled ?

The blank verse here, as always in Byron's poetry, is execrable ; but few would deny to the author of this passage a very real imagination.

But though I have protested against the notion that Byron had no dramatic power and no imagination, it is rather as the teller of a story that he is likely to be most remembered. The greatest story-teller in verse that the English race has yet produced is no doubt Chaucer ; and an opportunity offers of comparing Byron with the author of the 'Canterbury Tales.' It is strange that Chaucer's wonderful piece of verse on the story of Count Hugolin is so little known. The death of Hugolin of

course has been painted by Dante in such a manner as to leave little hope for any imitators; but I cannot help thinking that the following strong and tender passage of Chaucer deserves to be placed very near to the tremendous picture of Dante. Byron, too, wrote in 'The Prisoner of Chillon' a story so similar as to afford an excellent comparison with Chaucer. I propose then to set side by side the passage from Chaucer and a passage from Byron. Chaucer writes:

Of erl Hugilin of Pise the langour
 Ther may no tonge telle for pité.
 But litel out of Pise stant a tour,
 In whiche tour in prisoun put was he;
 And with him been his litel children thre,
 Theldest skarsly yf yer was of age;
 Allas! fortune! it was gret cruelté
 Suche briddes to put in such a cage.
 Dampnyd he was to deye in that prisoun,
 For Roger, which that bisschop was of Pise,
 Had on him maad a fals suggestioun;
 Thurgh which the peple gan on him arise,
 And putte him in prisoun in such wise
 As ye han herd, and mete and drynk he hadde
 So smal that wel unnethe it may suffise,
 And therewithal it was ful pore and badde.
 And on a day bifel that in that hour
 Whan that his mete was wont to be brought,
 The gayler schet the dores of that tour.
 He herd it wel, but he saugh it nought,
 And in his hert anon ther fel a thought
 That thay for hungir wolde doon him dyen.
 'Alas!' quod he, 'allas! that I was wrought!'
 Therwith the teeres felle fro his eyen.
 His yongest sone, that thre yer was of age,
 Unto him sayde, 'Fader, why do ye wepe?
 Whan wil the gayler bringen our potage?
 Is ther no morsel bred that ye doon kepe?
 I am so hongry that I may not sleepe.
 Now wolde God that I might slepe ever!
 Then schuld not hunger in my wombe cripe.
 Ther is no thing save bred that me were lever.'

From this point down to the last line—

Himself despeired eek for honger starf—

the whole story is told with a simplicity that is almost terrible.

Byron describes much the same situation of father and child.

But he, the favourite and the flower,
 Most cherished since his natal hour,
 His mother's image in fair face,
 The infant love of all his race,

His martyred father's dearest thought,
 My latest care, for whom I sought
 To hoard my life, that his might be
 Less wretched now, and one day free ;
 He, too, who yet had held untired
 A spirit natural or inspired—
 He, too, was struck, and day by day
 Was withered on the stalk away.
 Oh God ! it is a fearful thing
 To see the human soul take wing
 In any shape, in any mood :
 I've seen it rushing forth in blood,
 I've seen it on the breaking ocean
 Strive with a swoll'n convulsive motion ;
 I've seen the sick and ghastly bed
 Of sin delirious with its dread :
 But these were horrors—this was woe
 Unmixed with such—but sure and slow :
 He faded, and so calm and meek,
 So softly worn, so sweetly weak,
 So tearless, yet so tender—kind,
 And grieved for those he left behind

Here once more Byron cannot tell a story with the same directness and unsought pathos that Chaucer had at command. Still, in 'The Prisoner of Chillon,' in 'The Giaour,' and many another tale, he has proved his right to be considered the best narrator in verse since Chaucer.

Byron, then, is to be estimated chiefly by his range of power. In satire he is supreme, in description excellent, in power of narration the second of English poets. As a dramatist he is infinitely below the Elizabethans, yet he has dramatic grip ; in imagination he is infinitely below Milton and one or two others, but imagination he has, and of a real quality. I have no intention of 'placing' or attempting to 'place' Byron in English literature. Undoubtedly there are three English poets who are head and shoulders above the rest : Chaucer, Shakspeare, and Milton. They are so chiefly by a power of sheer conception which no later writer has approached ; and also by a power of execution of altogether higher quality than has since appeared. After these three is a gulf fixed. Then there is a huge throng of poets, whom it is difficult to class in any accurate order. Among the second throng, however, time will give Byron a high, probably the highest place, by virtue of his elemental force, his satire, and his width of range. He is to be set 'a little lower than the angels,' but to be 'crowned with glory and worship.'

STEPHEN PHILLIPS.

CREMONA.

A BALLAD OF THE IRISH BRIGADE.

[The French Army, including a part of the Irish Brigade, under Marshal Villeroy, held the fortified town of Cremona during the winter of 1702. Prince Eugène, with the Imperial army, surprised it one morning, and, owing to the treachery of a priest, had occupied the whole city before the alarm was given. Villeroy was captured, together with many of the French garrison. The Irish, however, consisting of the regiments of Dillon and of Burke, held a fort commanding the river gate, and defended themselves all day, in spite of Prince Eugène's efforts to win them over to his cause. Eventually Eugène, being unable to take the post, was compelled to withdraw from the city.]

The traitor priest Cassoli has done as was foretold ;
 The traitor priest Cassoli has touched the German gold ;
 He has dug away the screen,
 He has called to Prince Eugène,
 He has opened up a passage to Cremona.

The Grenadiers of Austria are proper men and tall ;
 The Grenadiers of Austria have scaled the city wall ;
 They have marched from far away
 Ere the dawning of the day,
 And the morning saw them masters of Cremona.

There's not a man to whisper, there's not a horse to neigh ;
 Of the footmen of Lorraine and the riders of Duprés,
 They have crept up every street,
 In the market-place they meet,
 They are holding every vantage in Cremona.

The Marshal Villeroy he has started from his bed ;
 The Marshal Villeroy has no wig upon his head ;
 'I have lost my men !' quoth he,
 'And my men they have lost me,
 And I sorely fear we both have lost Cremona.'

Prince Eugène of Austria is in the market-place ;
Prince Eugène of Austria has smiles upon his face ;
Says he, ' Our work is done,
For the Citadel is won,
And the black and yellow flag flies o'er Cremona.'

Major Dan O'Mahony is in the barrack square,
And just six hundred Irish boys are waiting for him there ;
Says he, ' Come in your shirt,
And you won't take any hurt,
For the morning air is pleasant in Cremona.'

Major Dan O'Mahony is at the barrack gate,
And just six hundred Irish boys will neither stay nor wait ;
There's Dillon and there's Burke,
And there'll be some bloody work
Ere the Kaiserlics shall boast they hold Cremona.

Major Dan O'Mahony has reached the river fort,
And just six hundred Irish boys are joining in the sport ;
' Come, take a hand !' says he,
' And if you will stand by me,
Then it's glory to the man who takes Cremona !'

Prince Eugène of Austria has frowns upon his face,
And loud he calls his Galloper of Irish blood and race :
' MacDonnell, ride, I pray,
To your countrymen, and say
They have nothing left to hope for in Cremona !'

MacDonnell he has reined his mare beside the river dyke,
His trumpeter behind him with a flag upon a pike ;
And six hundred boys were there
From Limerick and Clare,
The last of all the guardians of Cremona.

' Now, Major Dan O'Mahony, give up the river gate,
Or, Major Dan O'Mahony, you'll find it is too late ;
For when I gallop back
'Tis the signal for attack,
And no quarter for the Irish in Cremona !'

And Major Dan he laughed : ' Faith, if what you say be true,
 And if they will not come until they hear again from you,
 Then there will be no attack,
 For you're never going back,
 And we'll keep you snug and safely in Cremona.'

All the weary day the Kaiserlics they came,
 All the weary day they were faced by fire and flame,
 They have filled the ditch with dead,
 And the river's running red ;
 But they cannot win the last fort in Cremona.

All the weary day, again, again, again,
 The horsemen of Duprés and the footmen of Lorraine,
 Taafé and Herberstein,
 And the riders of the Rhine ;
 It's a mighty price they're paying for Cremona !

Time and time they came with the deep-mouthed German roar,
 Time and time they broke like the wave upon the shore ;
 For better men were there
 From Limerick and Clare,
 And who will take the gateway of Cremona ?

Prince Eugène has watched, and he gnaws his nether lip ;
 Prince Eugène has cursed as he saw his chances slip :
 ' Call off ! Call off ! ' he cried,
 ' It is nearing eventide,
 And I fear our work is finished in Cremona.'

Says Wauchop to McAulliffe, ' Their fire is growing slack.'
 Says Major Dan O'Mahony, ' We've seen their last attack ;
 But we're loth to stop the game
 While there's light to play the same,
 And we'll walk a short way with them from Cremona.'

And so they snarl behind them, and beg them turn and come,
 They have taken Neuberg's standard, they have taken Diak's
 drum ;
 And along the winding Po,
 Very gloomily and slow
 The Kaiserlics are riding from Cremona.

There's just two hundred Irish boys are shouting on the wall ;
There's just four hundred lying who can hear no slogan call ;
 But what's the odds of that,
 For it's all the same to Pat
If he pays his debt in Dublin or Cremona.

Says General de Vaudray, ' You've done a soldier's work !
And every tongue in France shall talk of Dillon and of Burke !
 Is there anything at all,
 Which I, the General,
Can do for you, the heroes of Cremona ? '

' Why, yes,' says Dan O'Mahony. ' One favour we entreat,
We were called a little early, and our toilet's not complete.
 We've no quarrel with the shirt,
 But the breeches wouldn't hurt,
For the evening air is chilly in Cremona.'

A. CONAN DOYLE.

THE RUSH TO THE KLONDIKE.

As an example of human folly, the insensate rush of the late summer and autumn to the Klondike Goldfields stands unique.

The announcement to the world of the discovery of rich placer-mines has, it is true, always been followed by an enormous rush, but here the conditions to be faced were utterly different from any hitherto known, so that the case is quite without parallel.

The great mass of these fortune-hunters, that is, those who did not go to the Behring Sea with the idea of getting up the Yukon from St. Michael's, would be dumped down with their effects on the rocks at the head of the Lynn Canal, in what is said to be Alaska, though it may turn out to be in British territory after all. From that moment they would be left entirely to their own devices, without any but the most casual and dearly bought assistance, and without shelter except such as they could contrive for themselves for the space of 600 miles between the salt water and Dawson City. Such a prospect alone would be enough to satisfy most people, but the worst has yet to be told, for the above is only what would have to be faced in the summer season, and the present was not a summer campaign at all.

Only those among the very foremost of the vast crowd who happened to be well supplied with funds to throw to the right and left of them, and could contrive to push their way over the passes and secure boats without loss of time for the long voyage to the Klondike, could possibly get in during the fall. Going 'in' the miners call it, and when they have made their pile, or for some reason or other have had enough of such an intolerable existence, they talk about coming 'out,' just as a convict might talk of going into or coming out of prison—a sufficiently close analogy, except that a convict has considerably the best of it in the matter of personal comfort.

As to the masses in the rear, their difficulties would daily increase in geometrical progression, as will be seen later on, until those of them who managed to push forward would be caught in the fierce storms of early winter, whose iron grip in this northern land would soon lay hold of them, and compel them to come to a stand, or, if it were possible, to beat a hasty retreat.

One wonders indeed what these people could have been thinking about to embark on such a foolhardy expedition. The greater part of them were Americans from the States, who might be supposed to have some knowledge of the beauties of a North American winter, ready enough as they are to jeer at the climate of Canada. If it had been a rush of Englishmen there would have been some excuse for them, for a stay-at-home Englishman has no conception of winter, and is unable to realise what it means. 'Winter' in this country is merely a negative expression signifying the absence of summer; it is rarely that one gets a touch of the real thing. The last time it happened was, I believe, in the early part of '95, and then people found that they were quite unprepared for a mere 10 or 15 degrees of frost, their houses were not adapted to withstand it, the water supply ceased, and the only way to keep warm was to sit with your feet on the fender. The ordinary life of the community was, in fact, semi-paralysed, for such an unusual condition of things was not provided for. But when the wily American of New York or Chicago is caught on a wild-goose chase it is indeed laughable, for in New York the winter is a positive quantity, and in the flats of Illinois the glass is apt to go to 20 degrees below zero, so that he is without excuse. 'Literally thousands of intelligent American citizens,' exclaimed the editor of a United States mining journal in August last, 'are rushing into a country where in a few short weeks the thermometer will range from 30 to 60 degrees below zero, and on special occasions freeze the mercury by way of entertainment, to suffer and starve through a long tedious winter and then be turned back from the promised land by the red-coated minions of Her Majesty's domains'—the idea apparently being that aliens would not be allowed to hold claims.

What then is the explanation of the enigma? It was the chink of the gold from the Klondike on the counter at San Francisco, which was heard from the Pacific to the Atlantic, that turned the head of the intelligent American. The new goldfields had mostly been exploited by United States citizens, old stagers from Alaska who had poured in on the new discoveries (though Inspector Constantine of the North-West Police had taken care to allow his troopers to reap some of the benefit), and the people of the Republic had got to look upon the region as their own happy hunting-ground, but much to their chagrin it turned out to be on the British side of the line.

In years to come, after the placer-fields have been played out, and quartz-mining, as is hoped and expected, will be in full swing, and when, with the advent of railways running through from East and South, the use of costly machinery shall have become a possibility, and a magnificent gold industry conducted on the newest scientific methods shall have taken the place of the present toilsome and clumsy efforts of the miner, and his life shall be no longer a mere odious parody of existence, the adventures of the unhappy people who tried to push in with the first rush will be looked upon with amazement. It is therefore worth while to put the details together before the circumstances have faded from view, more especially as any information concerning these outlandish regions is likely to be of use to numbers of our fellow-countrymen.

It was near the middle of July when the steamer *Excelsior* arrived in San Francisco from St. Michael's on the west coast of Alaska, with forty miners, having among them 750,000 dollars' worth of gold, brought down from the Klondike. When the bags and cans and jars containing it had been emptied and the gold piled on the counters of the establishment to which it was brought, no such sight had been seen in San Francisco since the famous year of 1849.

On July 18 the *Portland* arrived in Seattle, on Puget Sound, having on board sixty-eight miners, who brought ashore bullion worth a million dollars. The next day it was stated that these miners had in addition enough gold concealed about their persons and in their baggage to double the first estimate. Whether all these statements were correct or not does not signify, for those were the reports that were spread throughout the States. From this last source alone, the mint at San Francisco received half a million dollars' worth of gold in one week, and it was certain that men who had gone away poor had come back with fortunes. It was stated that a poor blacksmith who had gone up from Seattle returned with 115,000 dollars, and that a man from Fresno, who had failed as a farmer, had secured 135,000 dollars.

The gold fever set in with fury, and attacked all classes. Men in good positions, with plenty of money to spend on an outfit, and men with little beyond the amount of their fare, countrymen and city men, clerks and professional men without the faintest notion of the meaning of 'roughing it,' flocked in impossible numbers to secure a passage. There were no means

of taking them. Even in distant New York, the offices of railroad companies and local agencies were besieged by anxious inquirers eager to join the throng. On Puget Sound, mills, factories, and smelting works were deserted by their employés, and all the miners on the Upper Skeena left their work in a body. On July 21, the North American Transportation Company (one of two companies which monopolised the trade of the Yukon) was re-incorporated in Chicago with a quadrupled capital, to cope with the demands of traffic. At the different Pacific ports every available vessel was pressed into the service, and still the wild rush could not be met. Before the end of July, the *Portland* left Seattle again for St. Michael's, and the *Mexico* and *Topeka* for Dyea; the *Islander* and *Tees* sailed for Dyea from Victoria, and the *G. W. Elder* from Portland; while from San Francisco the *Excelsior*, of the Alaska Company, which had brought the first gold down, left again for St. Michael's on the 28th, being the last of the company's fleet scheduled to connect with the Yukon river boats for the season. Three times the original price was offered for the passage, and one passenger accepted an offer of 1,500 dollars for the ticket for which he had paid only 150 dollars.

This, however, was only the beginning of the rush. Three more steamers were announced to sail in August for the mouth of the Yukon, and at least a dozen more for the Lynn Canal, among which were old tubs, which, after being tied up for years, were now overhauled and refitted for the voyage north. One of these was the *Williamette*, an old collier with only sleeping quarters for the officers and crew, which, however, was fitted up with bunks, and left Seattle for Dyea and Skagway with 850 passengers, 1,200 tons of freight, and 300 horses: men, live-stock, and freight being wedged between decks till the atmosphere was like that of a dungeon; and even with such a prospect in view, it was only by a lavish amount of tipping that a man could get his effects taken aboard. Besides all these, there were numerous scows loaded with provisions and fuel, and barges conveying horses for packing purposes.

A frightful state of congestion followed as each successive steamer on its arrival at the head of the Lynn Canal poured forth its crowds of passengers, and added to the enormous loads of freight already accumulated. Matters became so serious that on August 10 the United States Secretary of the Interior, having received information that 3,000 persons with 2,000 tons of

baggage and freight were then waiting to cross the mountains to Yukon, and that many more were preparing to join them, issued a warning to the public (following that of the Dominion Government of the previous week) in which he called attention to the exposure, privation, suffering, and danger incident to the journey at that advanced period of the season, and further referred to the gravity of the possible consequences to people detained in the mountainous wilderness during five or six months of Arctic winter, where no relief could reach them. Soon afterwards the Secretary received the congratulations of the President of the North American Company at Seattle, thanking him for such a warning to people rushing to the Klondike country at such a time. Such conduct was quite worthy of a Mr. Facing-both-ways, for this company was at the same time advertising that it would carry passengers north on the *Portland* as late as *September 10*. The vessel could not arrive at St. Michael's before the Yukon was frozen, and there its passengers would have to stop until the summer of 1898. The fare, including board, was 1,000 dollars. A special inducement was offered to those taking passage on the *Portland*, that employment would be given to such as desired it, cutting and banking steamboat wood at four dollars a cord (a measure of wood making a fair load for a couple of horses). The idea of paying 1,000 dollars for such a privilege is amusing, when a man by staying at home could save 800 dollars, and get to the Klondike just as soon in the spring.

The rush was a perfect godsend to the traders in the Pacific ports, for in the west business had almost flickered out, and the most bitter rivalry sprang up between the different towns in their anxiety to secure the Yukon trade. In fact, it was the steamship companies and the storekeepers who raked in the gold, while the unfortunate adventurers got the experience. At Seattle, the newspapers resorted to the trick of pretending that supplies could be bought there and taken into the Yukon country free of duty, and upon arrival at Victoria the wrath of the victims was considerable when they found that customs duties would inevitably be levied at the Canadian border. This sort of thing is called bull-dozing, but the Seattle people well knew that in a very short time the whole of this business would be transacted in the British Columbia towns, in order that payment of duty might be avoided. Dyea had been made a sub-port of entry, and goods could be taken in bond across the coast-strip of Alaska.

A good joke is told of two San Francisco newspaper correspondents, who shall be nameless, as they were on their voyage north from the Sound on board the *Mexico*. Through conversation with other passengers, they had begun to comprehend the difficulty there would be in getting boats at the lakes, and decided to steal a march on the rest. When the steamer called at Metlakahla (an Indian mission-station on the mainland), they wandered down the beach where canoes were lying, and saw a small skiff which had been abandoned by its owners. This, they thought, would be easy to take over the mountains, and inquired its price from an old squaw who was sitting near. 'Sitkum dollar,' with a grin. 'What does she say?' said one. 'Oh!' replied the other, 'she says it's seventeen dollars.' 'Tell her I'll give her ten dollars,' at the same time showing an eagle. Further jargon, and then she took the coin and shuffled off. Some passengers who witnessed the deal saw the boat taken aboard, and told the joke when the vessel had left the wharf. When the squaw said 'sitkum dollar,' she meant fifty cents.

To come now to the state of things at the head of the Lynn Canal, where the steamers discharged their loads of passengers, horses, and freight. This was done either at Dyea or Skagway, the former being the landing-place for the Chilcoot Pass, and the latter for the White Pass, the distance between the two places being about four miles by sea. The White Pass¹ was a new route said to be practicable for horses, by which you might reach either Lake Bennett or Lake Tagish. The name does not signify that it is a snow-pass, but was given to it in honour of Mr. White, a former Minister of the Interior. There were no towns at these places, nor any convenience for landing, except a small wharf at Skagway, which was not completed, the workmen having been smitten with the gold-fever. Every man had to bring with him, if he wanted to get through and live, supplies for a year; sacks of flour, slabs of bacon, oatmeal, beans, and so forth, his cooking utensils, his mining outfit and building tools, his tent, and all the heavy clothing and blankets suitable for the northern winter, 1,000 lb. weight at least.

Imagine the frightful mass of stuff disgorged as each successive vessel arrived, with no adequate means of taking it inland!

¹ The White Pass is not the same as the Chilcat, as was stated recently at a meeting of one of the Klondike companies, but a different one altogether. The Chilcat Pass is not used by the miners.

There was a small number of Indians, one or two hundred perhaps, but their work was already cut out by the steady influx of miners who had been passing through all the summer before the rush had set in. Therefore if a man wanted to get through, he must bring also pack-horses with him, and if he brought horses he must bring fodder for them. To increase the hopelessness and misery of the situation, by the beginning of August the rains had set in; not the ordinary rains of the Columbian coast, but a merciless penetrating downpour, as it were of sheets of water, which defied waterproofs, and chilled men to the bone. A glance at the map will explain this. Chatham Strait and Lynn Canal form a continuous channel nearly 400 miles long, up which there is nearly always a strong wind blowing. The wind coming from the sea is heavily charged with moisture, which is precipitated when the currents of air strike the mountains, and the fall of rain or snow is therefore very heavy.

When the *Islander* returned to Victoria, after discharging her first load of gold-seekers at Skagway Bay, on Monday, August 2, the first message brought in was, 'Advise every one who may be looking toward Klondike to wait until spring before starting for the goldfields,' and the advice was reiterated with every piece of intelligence, whether private or official, that came to hand. The wharf was useless, and the heavily laden steamer had to be discharged by ship's boats and rafts, a piece of work which lasted till the Thursday following, the rain pouring down almost continuously the whole time. The 400 passengers were housed on the steamer while this was going on, but when once they had landed, even that amount of comfort was wanting. To pitch a tent and then have to live in it for an indefinite period under such circumstances, was a fairly trying ordeal to commence with. Skagway, a town of tents, was about a mile inland, with a sort of trail leading to it over rocks and boulders, from the wharf, the trail being hewn out of the rock. At low water you could pick your way along, but could not take a horse from the wharf (supposing he had been got on to it), as he would have to jump down ten feet, nor could he be led over the rocks. At every turn you were fleeced, and any one without plenty of cash was helpless. For taking your stuff ashore, scow-owners charged from two to five dollars per ton. For swimming a horse ashore, a man would charge two dollars and a half, for landing a boat two dollars, and ten dollars a week for a camping site. Men who were short of cash, of course, could get

no further. Numbers of others were speedily disheartened at the mere prospect, and sold their outfits for a song, one party letting a 400 dollar outfit go for twenty dollars. Such men either turned in to work at the camp, or made their way back south to wait till the spring. And these were the most fortunate of the whole crowd.

When the *Danube* arrived later on in Skagway Bay, difficulties arose through the action of United States officials. Customs-Inspector Smith had pointed out the spot, a short way from shore, where preceding steamers had anchored to discharge passengers and freight, and the unloading was proceeding with all hands at the work, passengers as well as crew. Sacks of flour, sides of bacon, stoves, and everything else had to be carried from low-water to high-water mark. When this had been going on for twenty-four hours, another official, who had followed the *Danube* from Juneau, boarded her and ordered her captain (Meyer) to cease unloading and move up to Dyea (the port of entry). At this time most of the cargo had been put ashore and all the horses had been landed, but no fodder. The captain refused, since he was acting under authority, and continued to unload. Two hours later more officials came aboard, and an inspector from Dyea—whose appointment had not been notified either to Smith or the captain—ordered the latter to take the vessel back to Juneau, a ten hours' run. Captain Meyer again refused, and Inspector Smith was instructed to seize the *Danube*, which he in his turn declined to do, not recognising the other's authority. Finally, however, the vessel was left in peace, owing to the common-sense and firmness of these two officers, and thus a very pretty international complication was averted. A United States vessel which anchored alongside just afterwards was allowed to unload without a word!

After you had got ashore with all your belongings, the first thing to be considered was the question of route. The difficulties and dangers of the Chilcoot were well known, but as to the new route over the White Pass, people were entirely ignorant. The earlier boats had all discharged their loads on the rocks at Dyea, but on the news of the White Pass being open, the boats put in at Skagway, so that the thousands of arrivals were divided between the two places.

It was just possible to pack your goods on horses (if you had them), for the distance from Dyea up to Sheep Camp, but even if you did so, the Indians had you at their mercy, and would charge you just as much to go over the summit as if you had not packed

your goods a single step. To attempt to do your own packing over the Pass, even if you were capable of it, would mean that you would not reach the river until it was frozen. There was only a small number of packers available, and the rates, which had been fourteen cents a pound in the spring, had gone up to twenty and twenty-five, and finally anything they chose to ask. The rise was not due to the quantity of freight, but to the fact that those with plenty of money had offered extravagant prices to get their goods through, and the Indians continued to demand the highest rates. Moreover, the word of these fellows was worthless. They would make a contract to take your goods at a certain time, and break it for no apparent reason, and no dependence could be placed upon them.

Those who managed to cross the pass found that there was no longer any wood near Lake Lindeman, and had to get their loads down to Lake Bennett before finding any suitable for boat building. There was little time to spare for this, however, and you might either purchase a boat, or go out some miles into the woods and get the logs yourself, and have them sawn at the rate of 140 dollars per thousand (feet); a good boat to carry 5,000 lbs. requiring 500 feet of lumber.

While painfully making their way over the mountain, the full fury of the stormy weather at this late season was encountered by those who were pushing on, increasing their difficulties enormously. On September 1, for instance, a blinding storm of snow and sleet raged on the Chilcoot, lasting from morning till night, a foretaste of the winter which was rapidly advancing.

Large numbers of those who were blocked at Dyea, seeing the hopelessness of the prospect before them, determined to try the other route. To get the goods down to Skagway, they had to employ the scow-owners, and once more go through all the performance of landing before trying a fresh start. Very little was known about this pass, except that it was a thousand feet lower than the Chilcoot, and a dozen miles longer to the lakes. There was said to be a sort of trail to the summit, but as to the other side there was no information. The trail in fact was a zigzag route over several mountains, and did not lead through the pass at all, as it was full of boulders.

For the first three miles from the camp you could get a wagon to the Skagway River, a shallow swift-running stream, over which the miners had thrown a flimsy bridge where one

horse could cross at a time. On these rapid streams, serious accidents were of constant occurrence. Attempting to cross the Skagway, a man named Fowler, of Seattle, whilst walking on a log which was partly under water, lost his balance and fell in. He had seventy-five pounds on his back, and a parcel in each hand, and thus encumbered he sank and was drowned. Provisions were constantly lost and horses with their packs carried away by the rushing water. In the river at Dyea, a resident of Nanaimo, named Wall, while crossing it with a packhorse, was swept away with his horse, and both were lost. Wall being heavily laden with luggage was helpless against the raging stream.

For three miles beyond the bridge above mentioned, wagons could be used until the Devil's Hill was reached, and here the trouble commenced. The so-called trail was of the most elementary character, a mere track intended for a few men with supplies to pass over for the survey purposes of a railway which it was proposed to lay down on the other side, and not for the passage of thousands of men with heavily laden horses. At critical points it was only a couple of feet wide, and at one place led up a steep incline, over which logs had been laid like a ladder. At the second hill, the track wound round it, and for horses the walking was execrable, being over a soft and slippery slate rock, with a fall of five hundred feet sheer to the river. Numbers of animals were lost over these precipices, one team of seventeen horses having lost eight of them on the first trip. After some miles of this character, a great bog a couple of miles long had to be crossed, which was cruel work for the horses, as they painfully floundered through the mud, for they would either die from exhaustion, or break a leg and have to be killed. Numbers of men gave in and camped along this morass, waiting for winter to freeze the ground so that they could cross on the ice.

If you get beyond this, for two and a half miles a hill rising six hundred and fifty feet is followed, with a trail going up one in four in places, a terrible ascent owing to the rock slides along the face of it. The descent on the farther side down the face of the rocks is sometimes one in three, where the animals sometimes slip on the left side over a drop of three or four hundred feet. Past this hill, the trail follows the swiftly running river for a mile, and the packs have to be carried on their backs by the men, who are already weakened by bad food and exposure, while the horses are got along from boulder to boulder as well as can be managed.

The trail leads to a rushing ford through which all the goods have to be carried by men in rubber boots up to their thighs. A whole pack train of fifteen animals was lost here when the water was high on account of the melting snow from the mountain-tops. Then comes a steep climb of a couple of miles through mud up to your knees before you reach the summit. A mile and a half from the summit you strike a lake three and a half miles long, on which in the end of August there was a boat, the owner of which charged you a cent per pound for carrying your goods over. Then a portage of a mile and a half and you come to the Middle Lake, five and a half miles long, where a boatman charged two and a half cents per pound for carriage of loads, and after this Shallow Lake. In leading a packhorse across the ford between Middle and Shallow Lakes on September 19, Mr. Cope, an ex-mayor of Vancouver, lost his life. The horse fell down, and Mr. Cope tried to pull him out, but was taken off his feet by the current and carried into deep water. There was no boat at hand, nor could any one get near enough to assist him, and after a short struggle he was drowned.

From the head of Shallow Lake it is eleven miles to Lake Bennett, and along this stretch are some very bad marshes, where horses were often lost. At Lake Bennett was a sawmill, where 110 dollars was charged for a boat to carry 3,000 lb., but before the end of August no more orders for boats could be taken. Boats were brought by some from Skagway, carried on men's backs, and numbers of these were broken and thrown away on the trail.

The difficulties of bringing heavy loads over such a trail as I have roughly described, with the ground trampled into mud after the heavy rains by the passage of thousands of men and pack animals struggling for a foothold, the delays and blocks which occurred when accidents happened or returning trains met those coming up, the coarse and ill-cooked food, the long hours of incessant labour from daylight till dusk, the nights in the open air when men would snatch a few hours' sleep on the moss, sometimes in a freezing atmosphere, or wet to the skin, the stench from the bodies of dead horses left to lie where they had fallen, are only some among the miseries and horrors endured by the wretched people who attempted the passage of the White Pass during the mad rush.

I have the highest authority for stating that the stories

about dead horses were not exaggerated. By actual count 3,200 horses were put on the trail during the autumn, and not more than 200 remained by the middle of October. Inexperienced management, bad trail, exposure, over-packing, overwork for seven days in the week, and starvation¹ are sufficient to account for the loss. Men who had built cabins along the trail removed the hides of the dead animals and used them for roofing.

On September 9 a boat at Lake Bennett was worth over 500 dollars, and space in one for a man with a 1,500 lb. outfit cost from 250 dollars upwards. Any attempt to begin the water journey after the ice had formed was a dangerous business. In the early winter on the Yukon a thaw was liable to occur on long reaches of the river (according to the lay of the bed) which would break up the frozen surface for miles together, when the ice would run down and be jammed in high impassable masses. Those who had crossed the mountains would then have to camp on the lakes, and spend the winter in boat-building and so forth; while any who were caught on the way down would have to camp where they were or get into the woods and run up a log shanty for their better protection against the fierce winter storms. Any attempt to move on with a load of 1,000 lb. would be clearly impossible, and so they would have to wait for the advent of spring, when very speedily they would find the first arrivals of the new year treading on their heels, and just as far advanced as they were themselves after all the misery they had endured.

Before the end of September people were preparing to winter on the coast, and Skagway was growing into a substantial town. Where in the beginning of August there were only a couple of shacks, there were in the middle of October 700 wooden buildings, and a population of about 1,500. Businesses of all kinds were carried on, saloons and low gaming houses and haunts of all sorts abounded, but of law and order there was none. The United States Commissioner, who was supposed to administer justice, was engaged in looking after his own affairs. Dyea also, which at one time was almost deserted, was growing into a place of importance, but the title of every lot in both towns was in dispute. No title to land could be given, and people merely squatted where they could find a suitable location. Rain was still pouring down, and without high rubber boots walking was impossible. None indeed but the most hardy could stand existence in such places, and every

¹ Hay at one time was 65 dollars a ton on the coast.

steamer from the South carried fresh loads of people back to their homes.

Of the 6,000 people who went in this fall, 200 at the most got over to the Dawson route by the White Pass, and perhaps 700 by the Chilcoot. There were probably 1,000 camped at Lake Bennett, and all the rest, except the 1,500 remaining on the coast, had returned home to wait till midwinter or the spring before venturing up again. The question of which was the best trail was still undecided, and men vehemently debated it every day with the assistance of the most powerful language at their command.

As to the crowds who had gone to St. Michael's, it is doubtful whether any of them got through to Dawson City, since the lower Yukon is impassable by the end of September, and, at any rate in view of the prospects of short rations, it would have been rash to try. The consequence would be, that they would have to remain on that desolate island during nine months of almost Arctic winter, for the river does not open again till the end of June. Here they would be absolutely without employment, unless they chose to stack wood for the steamboat companies, and their only amusements (save the mark) would be drinking bad rye-whisky—for Alaska is a 'prohibition' country—and poker-playing. For men with a soul above such delights, the heart-breaking monotony of a Northern winter would be appalling, and is only to be understood by those who have had to endure similar experiences themselves on the Western prairies.

In spite of all this, I do not wish it to be supposed that I think it unadvisable for a young fellow with the necessary qualifications to try his luck at prospecting in Yukon Territory if he is eager to do so. Not in the least. Only there are two ways of setting to work about it, the right way and the wrong way.

T. C. DOWN,

Of the Bar of the North-West Territories.

THE THRELKELD EAR.

IN feudal times, the peel or border tower of Threlkeld had stood, an outpost of defence, in one of the wildest valleys of the North of England.

The annals of those times are full of stirring tales of fierce encounter between the barons of the adjoining county and the overlords of Threlkeld.

But that was long ago. To-day no spot more set apart from war and rumours of war, none more wrapped about with 'silence and slow time' than Threlkeld Hall. The sole invaders now, the wind and the wild North Country weather, the stealthy creeping moss, the bold ivy climbing up to the turret windows—peering through the very loopholes in the battlements. The warders sleep sound, and the Lord of Threlkeld sits, listless and unarmed, by the great wood fire in the hall.

The peel has been given wings and other additions from generation to generation. Threlkeld is now a rambling country house falling to decay, whose special feature is the continuous suite of high-ceiled communicating rooms that run round the square oak hall of the central tower.

The present owner, old Christopher Threlkeld, was not born here. Indeed, the gossip of the scattered tenantry has been saying for many a day that no male child has been born at the Hall for over a hundred years.

If you make friends with old Mounsey, the butler, you may hear why; or, to speak by the card, you may be put in the way of divining.

Christopher Threlkeld had been born and educated abroad. At the time of his late marriage three people still stood between him and the Hall. When, an old man, well wearied of his life, he came to the house of his fathers, he had buried his English wife in a foreign land, and alienated himself from his only son on account of the young man's perverse and premature marriage.

Christopher Threlkeld had lived six years at the Hall when news came of the sudden death of his son. After much passing of letters it was decided, by the spring of the following year, that the young widow should bring her little boy of four to make his

grandfather's acquaintance, and, if all went well, to take up life at the Hall.

The old butler shook his head when he heard of the arrangement, and gave it as his opinion that young Mrs. Threlkeld should 'coom by hersel on a visit, an she liked; but the Hall wor an ill place for bairns.'

The new housemaid said pertly that, for her part, she didn't know as she cared about living in a place where everybody was a hundred. She should be 'main glad' to hear a child's voice in the lonesome rooms.

'Ye've not been here o' Christmas,' said Mounsey darkly, 'or ye'd coom to care less aboot the sound o' bairns' voices.'

'Do ye give a Christmas party?' said the new maid hopefully.

'Na, we doan't'—and Mounsey doddered upstairs with the lamps, mumbling to himself and shaking his old grey head.

In the early summer the young widow came, and saw, and the child conquered. Christopher Threlkeld's pride in his little grandson grew quickly to idolatry. The old house awakened from its long sleep, and there were laughter and singing up and down the halls—dead echoes stirred in their graves and faintly answered, and Threlkeld seemed minded to come forth from the shadows and the silences, and make common cause with the world of to-day.

It was soon apparent that Mounsey, like the rest, had become a devoted vassal of young Christopher. The boy's mother marvelled not a little, therefore, at the ancient butler's repeated hints, as the autumn waned to winter, of the Hall's being 'so ill a place for bairns when the birds went south.'

'You are tired of us, Mounsey,' Mrs. Threlkeld said one day, smiling at the liberty the old man took so simply.

'Na, na, ma'am,' he said hastily. 'But the winter is at the doure.'

'Never mind. We'll pile the logs higher, and we won't open the door.'

'Aye, if doures was any good.' And he went off shaking his head like one in an ague.

It was early in December when Mrs. Threlkeld spoke to the butler about the Christmas green, and the tree she meant to have for the child. Even her forbearance was taxed at the old man's ungraciousness. He plainly intimated that Threlkeld was not accustomed to these frivolities. Christmas wasn't kept like that

at the Hall, and the 'winter wor a bitter time, and bairns wor best in the South, wi' the swallows.'

Mrs. Threlkeld agreed in her heart that a bleaker place it would be hard to find in the dull December weather. Standing in that wind-swept hollow between the rugged hills, with the swift brown river tumbling at its very feet, and the brooding weary look of the ancient of days shrouding it like an almost impalpable mist—aloof, impregnable, Threlkeld was more like a mediæval prison than the home of modern men. No trace now of its brief summer smiling. The very sun looking down upon its battlements grew too chill to shine, and only glimmered greily.

After dinner, while his master sat over his wine, it was Mounsey's nightly habit (before bringing the lady's solitary cup of coffee) to come stealing into the oak hall, and shut and lock the doors communicating with the suite that ran round this central room, where the family gathered at all times of the day and evening. Then solemnly he would set the candlesticks on the table by the staircase that wound up opposite the mighty fireplace to the rooms above. To-night he hovered about aimlessly after the work was done, casting now and then a half-apologetic glance at Mrs. Threlkeld. She, unmindful, bent low over the wide hearth, looking deep into the fire-caves.

'The Hall is main old, ma'am,' said Mounsey at last, as though answering a question. 'It seems to like havin' old folk aboot. Sin' I wor a bairn meesel' and afeered to coom nigh t' gates, nobbut old men and old women ha' bided long at Threlkeld. There's no place like it for the old; but it canna put oop mooch wi' yoong things—not sin', not sin'——' his weak voice quavered away into silence, as though breath failed him.

'Yes,' Mrs. Threlkeld said absently, 'since what?'

Mounsey sent a shaky look over his shoulder.

'Oh, it wor a long time sin'. My grandfather could just remember. But *they* ain't forgot.'

'They?—the family?'

'Aye; them as *was* the family.'

'What haven't they forgotten?'

'It wor a bairn'—he looked round again uneasily—'a bairn that didna get his rights.'

The young mistress smiled. 'Do you mean that the child was——'

'Na, na, I mean nobbut'—he turned away with a frightened gesture—'nobbut it's an ill place for bairns, sin' that one wor done out of his rights.'

'Come here, Mounsey,' said the lady; 'have you ever seen anything strange hereabouts?'

'Na, na; I've seen the young die and the old grow older.'

'That's strange enough.' She shivered slightly. It was chill in the draughty hall. Winter had walked in through the bolted doors.

'Doan't ye think it ud do the young master good to be where it's warmer for a bit?'

'Why? Do you think he looks ill?'

'Na, na,' and the old man hobbled away.

When he came back with the tray the lady studied him curiously.

'He has caught his master's trick of intent listening,' she thought to herself, reminded suddenly of Mr. Threlkeld's frequent air of strained attention to some imperceptible sound. She was impressed by it anew, seeing this travesty of the familiar look on the old servant's face.

'What do you hear, Mounsey?' she said, as she poured out the coffee.

The old man stared.

'Hear, ma'am!'

'Yes.'

'Nothing, ma'am. *Is there something—*'

'Yes. You've heard strange things here in your time, now, haven't you?'

'Only o' Christmas Eve.'

'Ah, what then?'

'Ask t' master. Don't mind me. I'm fair deaf. The Threlkelds have got good ears. They sharpens 'em oop once a year.'

'Once a year?'

'Aye, o' Christmas Eve,' and he hobbled out with his tray.

That night, when Mr. Threlkeld joined his daughter-in-law in the hall, he found her playing softly on an old guitar. As he came in he made a sign that she should go on, and sat down without a word on the other side of the shaded lamp. She played on, with a curious delicacy of touch, subduing the sound, as if she were afraid of waking one who slept. The old man sat

motionless, half hidden behind the massive bronze lamp with its great drooping shade of silk. The fire burnt low. The room was full of shadows, the lady's eyes were full of dreams. Her thoughts went wandering down the long green alleys of her youth, trailing soft strains after her as she went, like intricate woven garlands. It was with music she had won her woman's kingdom, all the best of life had reached her through that gate. After long grief and silence she entered in again, trembling at first, uncertain, memory-weighted. Then the old joy came back—came back in floods, pouring through her white fingers, quickening her pulses and the time. In a twinkling she was in Paris. She was seventeen. Young Threlkeld was teaching her and her sister a Moorish dance. But she was the one he loved. It was that night he told her. She struck into the fantastic tune with the old sense of victory tingling in her veins, every nerve answering electrically the barbaric abandon of the air. Suddenly she started. Two great corpse-white hands were held up before her. The crashing music faltered, and died in low discord. The outstretched hands dropped under the lamplight. Old Christopher Threlkeld leaned forward, putting out pale hands again as if fearful she might begin afresh.

'How you frightened me!' said his daughter-in-law; 'I couldn't see you. Your hands came out of the gloom like an apparition.' Then, as he sank back without speaking, 'What is the matter? Do I play badly?'

'No, no;' the words came low and hurriedly. 'I see now you had not only your beauty, madam; you have another gift no Threlkeld can withstand.'

'Why did you stop my playing?'

'That last air—it takes one by the throat;' he shivered slightly. 'Don't play that again.'

'Your son liked it.'

'I can easily believe it wrought upon him. It is like strong drink.'

They sat silent for a time.

'Since you have a Threlkeld to bring up,' said the old man presently, 'you should know that the perception of sound in my family is preternaturally acute and sensitive. A certain kind of music is a passion with us, but much of our keenest suffering comes to us through our ears. The dulness of other people in the matter of sound is almost incredible to a Threlkeld. The

delicate sounds others cannot hear, the harsh sounds others so easily endure, are to us a lifelong marvel. You may have noticed how your son, who is brave enough before other ideas of danger, shrinks at a harsh or uncouth noise as if he had been struck.'

'Yes, I've come to realise his over-sensitiveness. I hope he will outgrow it.'

'He will carry it to his grave. It lies as deep as the roots of race. There's an old saying that a Threlkeld can hear the blast the carved angels on the battlements are blowing through their pipes of stone.'

The lady smiled.

'You remind me how I've often tried in vain to catch the sounds my boy says he hears. Faint bird-notes, I think, and the drone of insects. Specially since we came here into the country he——'

'Yes, yes, it comes back to us, it grows upon us in the quiet here. There is no doubt the world has much to learn of the power and the subtleties of sound. The enormous nerve-stimulus it could be made!'

'I should have thought the great composers had discovered that, and even the buglers in a battle.'

'Quite true, and the devil who invented your Moorish dance! He realised that rhythmical motion, combined with certain audacious and bewildering sounds, would make the sober drunk and the sane mad. But apart from what is called musical composition,' he dropped his voice, 'there's an undiscovered country.'

'*The Undiscovered Country?*' she asked suddenly.

The old man looked away.

'It is only the dulness in men's ears,' he said, half to himself, 'that makes them think "the rest is silence."'

'You have heard——?' she began uncertainly.

Christopher Threlkeld rose.

'If you were blind, madam, I could not show you the sun.' He walked away into the shadow, and came back standing before her. 'The man who sleeps by a mill or a cataract grows deaf to the roar. Whoever lives in the turmoil of a town must overcome his sensitiveness to sound, or he would go mad. So is a dull-eared race evolved. I've sometimes thought the evil noises of the modern world are its most hideous curse. The effect is the hopeless blunting of the sound-sense. None but savages and

dwellers in the wilderness are left to-day with hearing unimpaired. And then men wonder that— H'm!' Again he walked away.

'Any aurist will tell you,' he went on presently, 'that deafness, so rare in the elder world—so almost unknown among the uncivilised—is steadily on the increase. Among those, too, not in the least deaf *within a certain range*, some cannot hear a sound above the top A of the piano, many more cannot hear a single note of the octave beyond. There are those who can hear nothing below the bottom A, and many more for whom the lower octave does not exist. There are people who have never heard the cricket, and others who have never heard the dove. Yet all these limitations are as nothing to the growing inaccuracy of the world's perception of sound. The great problem in the casting of bells is the finding an ear true enough to detect the slight flatness or sharpness of the note. Not one ear in a thousand can be trusted. Yet the true pitch must be mathematically demonstrable. You know, of course, that every musical note has its corresponding geometrical figure?'

She shook her head. 'How does any one know that?'

'You've heard of "Chladni's figures"?'

'No.'

'Merely a little object-lesson on the mathematical basis of music. Chladni found by sprinkling fine sand on a metal plate, and then rubbing it with a violin bow, that a musical sound was produced which made the sand dance about and collect in a pattern on certain straight or curved lines. These lines indicated the 'nodes' or places where the vibratory movement did not exist. The designs are not more intricate and beautiful than they are mathematically exact. They gave the world the first ocular proof that to each determinate note belongs a determinate figure, and that the higher the note the more complicated is the design which is its equivalent expression. A Threlkeld perceives the harmony in these high whistling notes. To him "the quarter tone" is not of necessity discordant. But where the sound pattern is smudged and rudely broken up—wrenched violently out of grace and order as in your Moorish dance—a Threlkeld's nerves are torn and tortured, they suffer with the writhing murdered sound, his brain reels, night and chaos seem fallen on the earth.' He drew his hand across his eyes. 'But these things are far from most men's comprehension—happily, happily.'

'You think I, for instance, could never be taught to perceive these subtleties?'

The old man smiled indulgently, as though condescending to the capacity of a child.

'Certain things you could perceive if they were pointed out. You see this brass rod?' He pointed above the door that led to the music-room. 'That piece of metal has an affinity for E. Strike any other note, and it pays no attention. But—come here and give me E on the guitar.'

The lady joined him and twanged the string.

'Ah!' she exclaimed, as the rod distinctly echoed her.

'Now let us try the others.' She struck them all in turn. The rod was mute.

'Now E again!' cried the old man.

Once more it caught up the one sound it seemed to care for, clinging to it, letting it go with regret back to silence.

'There is some special sound affinity in each one of us,' said Christopher Threlkeld, as he bade his daughter-in-law good-night; 'there's some one note that we needs must answer if it call.'

'Unless the roar of life has deafened us, I suppose,' said the lady—wondering how far the theory applied to her—'unless we are cut off.'

'Ay, the mother of a Threlkeld does well to remember that. Most men *are* cut off, stone-deaf above and below the narrowing range of the modern gamut. But not the Threlkelds! They have never let go that fine-spun gossamer, the one tie left between us and——' he paused.

'Between us and the undiscovered country?'

He seemed not to hear. He lit his own candle, and said good night.

Christmas Eve at Threlkeld this year was surely not poor in outward cheer.

'For the child's sake,' the young mother had said to herself and to others, and again and again and before this magic phrase barriers and objections one by one went down. Why Mr. Threlkeld at first, and Mounsey to the bitter end, opposed her plan of throwing open and decorating the entire suite of music and reception rooms she did not understand. She did not even care to try. It was probably part of the dulness and inertia of

old age. But 'for the child's sake' (and partly because it would make so fair a sight for older eyes) the thing should be done. And it was. From room to room all gay with holly and pine and mistletoe, round the great hall till they reached the music-room, mother and child followed Mounsey on Christmas Eve, and watched him light the candles in the sconces and in the great central chandeliers.

'Now this is as far as we can go!' Mrs. Threlkeld cried, turning back from the closed door of the music-room. 'Run to the hall and tell your grandfather we're ready.'

Instead of opening the door behind him communicating with the hall, away ran the excited child, unheeding his mother's call, retracing his steps through the whole brilliant suite, flying on and on, dazzled, bewildered, till he reached the forbidden music-room, from the other side.

As he opened the door, a great blazing Christmas tree confronted him—a tree so tall and grand and shining, that the child gave a shrill little cry and stood transfixed. His mother, waiting at the other door, called Mr. Threlkeld in from the hall.

'The baby lost his way,' she explained; 'but I think he couldn't be more enraptured if he had come in with you, as we planned, from the dim hall.'

The ecstatic moments from five till seven, the child's bedtime, were cruelly short. His mother suggested a half-hour's grace, but Mr. Threlkeld opposed the idea so vehemently, it was given up. In a passion of tears and still trembling with excitement, the little boy was borne off to bed.

At the lady's urgent request they sat in the music-room that night; but Mrs. Threlkeld declined to play.

'Why not? The child is too far away to be kept awake.'

'I feel tired to-night,' she said. 'To-morrow I will play.'

They sat there talking. After some time Mr. Threlkeld looked at his watch.

'I won't go to bed just yet,' said the lady, as the old man rose.

'You said you were tired,' he remonstrated.

'Yes; but not sleepy.'

'You won't sit up long?' he half inquired, half commanded.

'Oh, no!'

'I don't think Mounsey will like staying up late to-night,' he said persistently.

'He can leave the lights here and in the hall, I'll put them out;' she took up an old song book. Mr. Threlkeld had not been gone five minutes when Mounsey appeared.

'I hope ye'll not tak' it ill, ma'am,' he said shakily, 'but I don't like to go to bed and leave—leave the lights a burnin'.'

'Then why do you go?' she said coldly. 'It's earlier than usual.'

'We're all abed by this time most Christmas Eves.'

'What is it, Mounsey?' she said, idly turning over the yellow leaves of music. 'What are you afraid of?'

'Will ye coom into the hall, ma'am?' said the old creature, nervously beckoning her to the door. Mrs. Threlkeld smiled at herself as she followed him.

'It's t' bairn's night, ma'am,' he said in a whisper. 'I couldn't tell ye in yon room. That's where it bides—that's where it——'

'It? What——?'

'It wor done out of its rights o' Christmas Eve. It cooms back once a year. An'—he had lowered his voice so, Mrs. Threlkeld could barely hear—'if there's anither bairn in its place it tries to do him an ill.'

'How?'

'It's fair jealous, ye mind—jealous o' the bairn in its place.'

'But there was no child here for years and years.'

'Ay! Then it joost cooms and roons aboot the place—harmless like, playin' soft on a little pipe and cryin' betimes—cryin' pitiful when it's roon down in the music-room and smothered.'

The lady turned away; a little scornful smile played about her mouth.

'Eh, but ye'll hear it an' ye sit oop,' Mounsey warned her. 'Ye'd best not make it angry, now there's anither bairn in its place.'

'How is it supposed to hurt the other?' she said curiously.

'Eh! it lures the live one out of his bed—lures him wi' a painted pipe. Only a bairn can see it, but old and a' can hear.'

'Hear what?'

'The whistlin'—verra soft and low. It blows on the pipe and then holds it oot, and the live bairn roons after it all ower the hoos—roons and roons till he drops doon dead.'

'I won't be up long,' said Mrs. Threlkeld, turning away with some impatience. 'You needn't stay. I'll attend to the lights.'

She waited till the old man had gone, and then, lighting a candle, ran swiftly up the great staircase, smiling at her foolish fears, but never stopping till she found herself in the far west wing at the nursery door. She tried it. It was locked. She knocked with soft impatience; but not until she called the nurse by name was the door slowly and unwillingly opened.

‘Why is the door locked?’ she asked.

The old woman made some muttered excuse and retired to her own room beyond.

Mrs. Threlkeld put down her candle by the night-light, and sat on the side of the child’s cot. She stayed there a long while, looking at the flushed little face and the chubby hands that, even in sleep, clutched the glorified penny whistle he had begged off the Christmas tree.

The mother laid her head on the pillow beside him and stroked his yellow hair.

The old nurse had gone to bed; the light in her room was extinguished. When Mrs. Threlkeld went away she closed the nursery door without a sound, so that no sleeper should be wakened.

She went down to the hall and looked at the clock. It was absurdly early—no wonder she didn’t feel sleepy. She took up a book, and made herself comfortable in Mr. Threlkeld’s easy chair.

It was the smoking of the big lamp that roused her. That foolish Mounsey was far too old for careful service. Twice lately had the unfilled lamps given out before the short evening was half done. Faugh! this one smoked vilely. She presently put it out and sat in the pleasant fire-glow. What time was it? She turned to see, but the hall clock was too much in the shadow. It was very still in the house. Everybody must have gone to bed, but it couldn’t be late. There was not much holiday air about the sombre place for all her pains. Mrs. Threlkeld felt suddenly that her Christmas plans had fallen out rather drearily after all; and yet the rooms had looked superb. She crossed the hall and pushed open the great drawing-room door—pitch dark, of course! Impulsively she came back, thrust a taper in among the embers, and carried the faint little flame into the great room adjoining. She lit a single candle in a low-placed sconce, and looked about. Certainly it was most beautiful. What a place for a ball!

Leaving the one candle to burn demurely in its brazen setting, she passed on with her taper to the next room, and lit a candle

there, and then to the next, and so on, leaving a faint trail of light struggling behind her through the open doors, till she reached the music-room.

Here the candles burnt low in their sockets. Some were already out. How horribly dreary it looks now! she thought, remembering the brilliant tree and the excited child dancing for joy in the flood of light earlier in the evening.

'I can't go to bed feeling like this; I should cry my eyes out.' She blew out the taper. 'The candles won't last much longer—nobody can hear, and there'll be just time to——. Is the guitar in tune?' She caught up the instrument and tried it. Out of the stillness soft and clear one of the notes was repeated. She started and tightened her nerves to listen. Absolute quiet reigned. She tried the instrument again, and again the distinct whistling answer.

'The bairn with his ghostly pipe,' she thought to herself, half smiling, half afraid. As she struck the same note again she remembered the brass rod over the door. She went forward to hear it more distinctly. As she stood there listening, a wholly unaccustomed dread of the occult in physical nature seized upon her strongly.

'How little we know about the soul of things!' she thought. Nervously she twanged the same string once again, shivering a little as the inevitable reply came humming back.

'How is it,' she said, looking up to where the brass rod glimmered faintly; 'how is it that you know this one out of all the voices of earth? How is it that it always sets you thrilling? If I play many notes, can you pick out your own?' she thought, beginning a low cadenza. 'Yes, yes,' she whispered, listening intently, 'every time I touch E, the queer human thing remembers and cries out.'

In a gathering excitement she played on—faster, faster, trying to put the echo off the track to elude—bewilder it. But faithfully it followed. Half angrily she struck into the Moorish dance. Two candles flickered out. Faster she played, and faster. The blood was hot in her body, her sense of hearing strained almost to bursting. Did she actually detect the monotonous ping-g-g of the brass rod echoing the flying note, or did she fancy it? Had she left the faithful follower far behind? No, no! There! there it sang again! All her spirit seemed to pass into the act of listening. Breathless she played on. It was like a

race. Suddenly behind the barbaric air she thought she heard far-off crying, crying in that one monotonous key—children's voices. What madness! It could be only old Mounsey's tales working unconsciously on her senses. She wound up the last wild variation of the dance with feverish energy, horrified to feel how she was trembling, and how persistent was the impression of children crying in the night.

She stood a moment by the open door listening painfully. Nearer and nearer, and now quite distinct, came the voice of a little child sobbing—sobbing. Standing rigid by the door, the woman let the guitar slip slowly out of her nerveless fingers to her feet. As it rang on the oaken floor, the last candle smouldered out. She stood in darkness facing the dim firelit hall. The crying was now so near it could be told the child was running, or would be running, if it were a child at all and not a crazy fancy. Suddenly a little white figure dashed down the great hall stairs, crying bitterly and holding out its arms. As it reached the bottom, the firelight fell for a moment on the bare feet twinkling under a white night-gown—on flying yellow hair and on wide glassy eyes. As it ran across the strip of firelight to the drawing-room Mrs. Threlkeld gave a cry. It startled the child, who ran on still more feverishly, crying and holding out its arms—on down the long room where the single candle flickered faintly—on, and on, still crying and still holding out pitiful arms. The sound of the hurrying footsteps behind seemed to frighten it to the pitch of frenzy. Like a hunted creature of the woods, it flew on before its pursuer from one shadowy room to another, not stopping even on the threshold of the pitch-dark music-room.

But here the woman paused. The child had vanished, had melted into the dark. Had she been dreaming all the time? No! there it was again! The little white figure shot out into the faint light beyond, starting on its frantic round again.

'Is it *you*, my baby?' cried the woman, 'or am I mad—or do I dream? Help! help!' She rushed into the hall and pulled wildly at the bell. The white vision shot past the nearest door.

'It *is* my child,' the woman cried again, and stumbled after it—'or it would be,' her dazed thought added, 'if any child of flesh and blood would fly from its mother like a white bird in the dark.'

Again it was swallowed up in the gloom. The woman paused half fainting as before at the music-room door.

'Now in a moment I shall see it darting into the dim light beyond.' But the crying, grown weaker and weaker, culminated suddenly in a dull crash, ending with a note like music, and that note was caught up, held and echoed, and then reluctantly suffered to die. Silence—absolute. The woman listened at the farther threshold in dumb agony. No more crying, no phantom flying out into the light—nothing.

She crept painfully back into the firelit hall. On the stairs a tall figure stood. She shivered as she turned her eyes away. 'Shall I see phantoms wherever I look to-night?' she thought.

'Was it you who rang?' said a familiar voice.

'Oh, Mr. Threlkeld! for God's sake come!' She fell prone at the foot of the stairs.

The old man came down and tried to lift her.

'Come, come!' he whispered. 'No servants will answer bells to-night.' He got her to a chair and lit two candles. 'No need to ask why you rang,' he muttered.

'I heard—I thought I heard a child crying.'

'Ah! Threlkeld is sharpening your ears.'

'But I—I *saw* the child.'

'Eh?'

'Yes, saw it running through these rooms.'

'I've never *seen* it,' said the old man, speaking low.

'But I saw its face, I tell you; and oh God! it was like—it was like—come!'—she caught up one of the candles—'it was here it faded away!'

With an evident unwillingness the old man followed, bringing the other light. As Mrs. Threlkeld reached the music-room door she stopped short with a piercing cry, and the candle fell from her hand.

'It's here!' she whispered over her shoulder. 'Oh don't leave me! It's lying here on the floor.'

Mr. Threlkeld came forward and held up the light. Between the threshold and the Christmas tree lay the body of his little grandson flung across the broken guitar.

The doctors talked of undue excitement, of sleep-walking, and of failure of the heart. The Threlkelds bow their heads—of what use words?

C. E. RAIMOND.

A LITERARY FRIENDSHIP.

‘What a thing friendship is, world without end!’

THERE are many points of view from which the biographer and the student of human character might consider the recently published correspondence of Elizabeth Barrett Browning.¹ It would be interesting with these letters for our text to discuss the value of familiar letters as a revelation of character in both ‘sender and sent-to,’ or to write of familiar letters as literature pure and simple, and to compare or contrast Mrs. Browning’s performances with those of Mme. de Sévigné and Cowper. There would also be something to say for and against the practice of printing for the benefit of the reading public the letters of authors (who should in the opinion of some be sufficiently known in their works), either in portions or in their entirety. These are nice problems, but their consideration may in the present instance be left to other pens.

A careful perusal of the letters proves that there are many sides from which Elizabeth Barrett Browning, the woman and the poet, might be profitably studied. It would be interesting to write of her as daughter, wife, and mother, and to dwell on the romance of her perfect marriage; or we might examine her work as that of the greatest woman-poet the world has yet seen, and show how she, for the first time in the annals of poetry, set forth from the woman’s point of view many subjects that had hitherto been treated solely from the man’s. Her attitude to literature and to politics offers likewise an attractive subject to the essayist.

We propose, however, to trace the history of the friendship, extending over an unbroken period of twenty years, between Elizabeth Barrett Browning and Mary Russell Mitford. Women’s supposed incapacity for friendship has at all times furnished a subject for the satirist. The relations of these two remarkable women offer an enduring example of the fallibility of most *dicta* concerning the emotional side of human beings. It will not be necessary to emphasise here the affection and esteem of the

¹ *The Letters of Elizabeth Barrett Browning*, edited, with biographical additions, by Frederick G. Kenyon. 2 vols. 1897. Smith, Elder, & Co.

friends: they are revealed in almost every page of their correspondence. Mrs. Browning was not given to express her emotions in words at any time; her sensitive soul shrank from such utterance, and, beyond the frequent use of the epithets 'kindest,' 'warm-hearted,' 'most affectionate,' there is little verbal reference to the love she felt in her heart. Miss Mitford's less reserved temperament took genuine delight in uttering her feelings aloud, and among the many beautiful passages which breathe her love for 'her dear young friend' there is none more characteristic than this, written in 1842:

My love and my ambition for you often seem to be more like that of a mother for a son, or a father for a daughter (the two fondest natural emotions), than the common bonds of even a close friendship between two women of different ages and similar pursuits. I write and think of you, and of the poems that you will write, and of that strange brief rainbow crown called Fame, until the vision is before me as vividly as ever a mother's heart hailed the eloquence of a patriot son. . . . The position that I long to see you fill is higher, firmer, prouder than ever has been filled by woman. It is a strange feeling, but one of indescribable pleasure. My pride and my hopes seem altogether merged in you.

And a few weeks later, commenting on Miss Barrett's praise of her letters, Miss Mitford says:

They come from my heart, and therefore go to yours; but that is all their merit—merit to us only—to the lover and the loved.

It is our intention in this place to dwell rather on the intellectual and literary than on the emotional side of the friendship, and to learn from the correspondence what we can of the general attitude of two thoughtful women during the first half of the nineteenth century to literature and to mankind. The difference in their circumstances lends to their discussions a pleasing variety.

Miss Mitford wrote for bread, not only for herself, but for a selfish, extravagant father. She sacrificed health and happiness to the needs of an egoist whose selfishness blinded him to the sacrifice that was made for him; but her self-deception equalled his, for she never seems to have found anything reprehensible in her father's conduct. During the whole of her life she had a hard task to make both ends meet. 'Although want, actual want, has not come,' she tells Miss Barrett in 1842, 'yet fear and anxiety have never been absent.' In a letter written fourteen months before she died, when she was crippled by rheumatism, she reminds her friend—

We must not forget, in thinking of my case, that for above thirty years I had perpetual anxieties to encounter—my parents to support and for a long time to nurse, and generally an amount of labour and of worry and of care of every sort such as has seldom fallen to the lot of woman.

But we, who are the inheritors of her labours, can never forget that to this pressing need of earning money we owe her greatest work, 'Our Village;' for she tells us herself that it was only her poverty that made her turn 'from the lofty steep of tragic poetry to the every-day path of village stories.' Miss Mitford hated the act of composition, and inwardly despised the literary craft; she preferred to cultivate her geraniums, and to give play to her social instincts, exercising her warm human sympathies in the interests of her friends, among whom were many persons that she had never seen. Mrs. Browning, on the contrary, wrote solely because her genius impelled her, caring for the perfection of her art, and not needing, fortunately, to seek pecuniary reward. And thus it happened inevitably that the one underrated, while the other overrated, the literary vocation.

The first meeting between Elizabeth Barrett and Mary Mitford took place on May 27, 1836, when the former was thirty and the latter forty-nine years of age.¹ Miss Mitford's reputation was already made, whereas Miss Barrett had only published 'An Essay on Mind' (1826), a translation of 'Prometheus Bound' (1833), and one or two poems in the 'New Monthly Magazine.' Mr. Kenyon, the 'cousin and friend' to whom 'Aurora Leigh' is dedicated, introduced Miss Barrett to Miss Mitford, who described the event for her father's benefit:

I told you, my dearest father, that Mr. Kenyon was to take me to the giraffes and the Diorama, with both of which I was delighted. A sweet young woman whom we called for in Gloucester Place went with us—a Miss Barrett—who reads Greek as I do French, and has published some translations from Æschylus, and some most striking poems. She is a delightful young creature; shy, timid, and modest. Nothing but her desire to see me got her out at all. . . . She is so sweet and gentle, and so pretty, that one looks at her as if she were some bright flower; and she says it is like a dream that she should be talking to me, whose works she knows by heart.

In connection with future events it is worthy of notice that in mentioning the guests at dinner on May 26 at Serjeant Talfourd's, where Miss Mitford was staying, she includes 'a Mr. Browning, a young poet (author of "Paracelsus").'

The following Thursday (June 2) Miss Mitford, furnished with an order from the Duke of Devonshire, took Miss Barrett and Wordsworth to Chiswick to see the 'pictures and flowers.' Miss Barrett, describing the expedition to a friend, wrote: '[I] thought

¹ Miss Mitford was born in 1787, and died in 1855. Mrs. Browning was born in 1806, and died in 1861.

all the way I must be dreaming.' The two women saw each other almost daily during the week of Miss Mitford's visit to London, and thus were laid the foundations of a firm friendship.

We met so constantly, and so familiarly (says Miss Mitford), that, in spite of the difference of age, intimacy ripened into friendship, and after my return into the country we corresponded freely and frequently, her letters being just what letters ought to be—her own talk put upon paper.

And Miss Barrett on her part told her friend, Mrs. Martin, that Miss Mitford,

who overflows with warm affections and generous benevolences, showed me every present and absent kindness, professing to love me, and asking me to write to her.

Looking back on these first impressions at some fifteen years' interval, Miss Mitford wrote of Miss Barrett as one of the most interesting persons she had ever seen, and it must not be forgotten that for thirty years before she met Miss Barrett, Miss Mitford had been accustomed to see frequently the most interesting men and women of her time.

Everybody who then saw her said the same; so that it is not merely the impression of my partiality, or my enthusiasm. Of a slight, delicate figure, with a shower of dark curls falling on either side of a most expressive face, large tender eyes richly fringed by dark eyelashes, a smile like a sunbeam, and such a look of youthfulness, that I had some difficulty in persuading a friend in whose carriage we went together to Chiswick that the translator of the *Prometheus* of Æschylus, the authoress of the *Essay on Mind*, was old enough to be introduced into company—in technical language, was *out*.

As Miss Mitford dwelt at Three Mile Cross, near Reading, and Miss Barrett in London, Torquay, and, after her marriage, in Italy (paying only rare visits to England), the two friends did not often meet face to face, although Miss Mitford made a practice of going to town to spend a day with Miss Barrett as often as she could be spared. They were thus dependent on letters as a mode of communication. Unkind fate prevails in that we have not the letters complete of either correspondent, and unfortunately the gaps occur at the most irritating moments. There are only eight or nine of Miss Barrett's letters to Miss Mitford available between 1836 and 1846, the year of Miss Barrett's marriage, although we know that during that period she wrote to Miss Mitford two or three times a week. 'Put Mme. de Sévigné and Cowper together,' the latter tells a correspondent, 'and you can fancy them.' Referring to these letters many years later, Miss Mitford said that she had a great basket full of them,

'for before Mr. Browning stole her from me we used to write to each other at least twice a week, and by dint of intimacy and frequency of communication could, I think, have found enough matter for a correspondence of twice a day. It was really talk, fireside talk, neither better nor worse, assuming necessarily a form of permanence—gossip daguerreotyped.' Miss Mitford's letters to Miss Barrett after the end of 1844 are scanty, and are altogether wanting for the years 1846, 1847, 1851, and 1852. References to the missing letters are, however, numerous in those written to other friends by both Miss Mitford and Miss Barrett, and of those references we have freely availed ourselves in order to preserve some continuity in our narrative.

The first extant letter from Miss Mitford to Miss Barrett is dated June 1836, and in it Miss Mitford gives her 'dear young friend' advice on the importance of clearness of style:

This is a terrible liberty from me to you, but I have seen so much high poetical faculty lost and buried from the one fault of obscurity, that I would impress upon every young writer the paramount necessity of clearness.

In a letter dated August 16 Miss Mitford reverts to the subject:

You should take my venturing to criticise your verses as a proof of the perfect truth of my praise. I do not think there can be a better test of the sincerity of applause than the venturing to blame.

Obscurity of style was much discussed between them for some time, but by 1838 Miss Mitford had come to the conclusion that as far as Miss Barrett is concerned

It is merely the far-reaching and far-seeing of a spirit more elevated than ours, and [I] look at the passage till I see light breaking through, as we see the sun shining upon some bright point in some noble landscape.

The poems referred to must have been those that appeared in the 'New Monthly Magazine.'

When Miss Mitford was in 1837 appointed editor of the annual 'Finden's Tableaux,'¹ she invited Miss Barrett to contribute. The plates, it appears, were prepared before the letter-press, a practice more honoured in the breach than in the observance, and we find Miss Mitford choosing for her 'sweet love' the prettiest plate—a group of Hindoo girls launching their lamps upon the Ganges—and asking her to write a poem on the 'pretty superstition.' Miss Barrett sent the verses entitled 'A Romance of the Ganges,' and they duly appeared in the issue of 1838. To the

¹ It came out under her editorship in 1838, 1839, and 1840.

same publication for 1839 Miss Barrett contributed 'The Romaunt of the Page,' which she describes as a very long barbarous ballad, and tells Mr. H. S. Boyd 'the subject is not of my own choosing.' In a letter to another friend written at this time, Miss Barrett expresses her views on contributing to periodicals: 'I confess I don't hold any kind of annual, gild it as you please, in too much honour and awe.' Yet when Miss Mitford confided to her the difficulties she had with the proprietor of the annual, Miss Barrett said generously '*You may make whatever use of me you please, as long as I am alive, and able to write at all.*' It is interesting to note here that when Thackeray in 1860 asked her to contribute to the CORNHILL MAGAZINE, she says in a letter to Miss I. Blagden:

I have just sent a lyric¹ to Thackeray for his magazine. He begged me for something long ago. . . . I only just got leave from Robert to send something; he is so averse to the periodicals as mediums.

About 1839 the doctors sent Miss Barrett to Torquay for her health. She was very ill, and Miss Mitford in her letters to others frequently expresses her fear that the poetess will not recover. 'Next to my father, she is the creature whom I best love; and if it were not for my duty to him I should go to Torquay to be near her.' Miss Barrett was accompanied by her brother Edward, who was deeply attached to her. When there was question of removal from one London house to another, she told Miss Mitford that he 'meant to fold her in a cloak and carry her to the new house in his arms.' In 1840 Edward Barrett was drowned while boating off Torquay, a tragedy that overshadowed the whole of his sister's life. She remained in Devonshire until the September of the following year, when she returned to her father's house. There, until her marriage in 1846, although able to interest herself in intellectual pursuits, she led the life of a confirmed invalid.² Miss Mitford had made her a present of a dog whom she called Flush, after one belonging to the donor. 'Flush,' writes Miss Barrett, 'is my constant companion, my friend, my amusement, lying with his head on one page of my folio while I read the other.'³ Miss Mitford wrote to her constantly during those five years, relating in her bright, humorous manner all that was happening to herself and her friends, commenting on the books she read and on

¹ 'A musical instrument.'

² Cf. *Sonnets from the Portuguese* (25 and 26).

³ See the poem 'To Flush, my Dog.'

their authors. She herself was far from well, and her father was very ill; at times she falls into despondency, and is less in love than ever with her profession. Commenting on the death of L. E. Landon, she remarks 'Nothing seems to me so melancholy as the lives of authors.' About the same time, in reference to Scott, she says 'All literary people die over-wrought—it is the destiny of the class;' and of Southey, 'His fate is equally or even more deplorable.' In another letter Miss Mitford relates ghost stories, and remarks in passing, 'I agree partly with you that there are glimpses of another world.' It would seem that even at that early date Miss Barrett must have revealed something of the frame of mind that afterwards led her to believe in spiritualistic manifestations.

During the last months of Dr. Mitford's life—he died December 11, 1842—his daughter wrote very often to Miss Barrett. On these letters she comments, when writing to Mrs. Martin, in terms that sufficiently prove the differing temperaments of the two friends:

Miss Mitford's letters from the deathbed of her father make my heart ache as surely almost as the post comes. There is nothing more various in character, nothing which distinguishes one human being from another more strikingly, than the expression of feeling, the manner in which it influences the outward man. If I were in her circumstances, I should sit paralysed—it would be impossible to me to write or to cry. And she, who loves and feels with the intensity of a nature warm in everything, seems to turn to sympathy by the very instinct of grief, and sits at the deathbed of her last relative, writing there, in letter after letter, every symptom, physical or moral—even to the very words of the raving of a delirium, and those, heart-breaking words! I could not write such letters; but I know she feels as deeply as any mourner in the world can. . . . There are probably as many different dialects for the heart as for the tongue, are there not?

In 1844 the first collected edition of Elizabeth Barrett's poems was published, and Miss Mitford tells her friends that it is making a great impression in England and America. In the same year Miss Barrett writes to Miss Mitford:

Now I do think that a true poetical novel—modern, and on the level of the manners of the day—might be as good a poem as any other, and much more popular besides.

To which Miss Mitford replies:

I am enchanted to find that you mean to write narrative poetry, and narrative poetry of real life. We must talk over subjects and stories.

¹ It is only fair to state that there is nothing in the published letters of Miss Mitford to warrant this description. She constantly recurs in the midst of her natural anxieties to such subjects as books or country scenes and incidents likely to interest her correspondent.

Surely 'Aurora Leigh' was already taking shape in Miss Barrett's mind.

Miss Barrett kept her marriage a secret from Miss Mitford, as from all the rest of her friends. As soon as the event might be told, Mrs. Browning informed Miss Mitford, who wrote a letter which was received at Orleans while the Brownings were on their way from Paris to Italy. Mrs. Browning replied immediately:

I thank you from the bottom of my heart for saying to me that you would have gone to the church with me. *Yes, I know that you would.* And for that very reason I forbore involving you in such a responsibility, and drawing you into such a net.

In conclusion she asked Miss Mitford to continue to write to her, and notwithstanding the distance between England and Italy, notwithstanding the new ties and the rare meetings, the correspondence was carried on until Miss Mitford's death in 1855, with such absolute regularity that if a letter failed to reach Florence at the usual hour, its non-arrival threw the Brownings into a state of anxiety: 'Your letters come so regularly to the hour, you see, that when it strikes without them, we ask why?'

Mrs. Browning¹ has herself confessed how her lover changed for her the face of all the world. No longer 'faint and blind,' her nature expanded in the sunshine of her husband's great and abiding love: her letters grow less reserved, and she is, so to speak, less shy with herself. She writes freely to Miss Mitford of her love for her husband:

You must have faith in me, for I never can make you thoroughly to understand what he is, of himself, to me—the noblest and perfectest of human beings. . . . You won't blame me for bad taste that I say these things, for can I help it when I am writing my heart to you?

Her marriage has, she declared,

proved the possibility of book-making creatures living happily together. I admit though, to begin (or end), that my husband is an exceptional human being, and that it wouldn't be just to measure another by him.

Her own experience naturally led her to believe intensely in the happiness of marriage, and she held that the great fact of love and marriage was every woman's chief concern, that it was a purely personal matter, and that smallness of income ought never to be an obstacle: 'I would marry ("if I were a woman," I was going to say), though the whole world spouted fire in my face.'

As nearly all the letters written to Miss Mitford by

¹ Cf. *Sonnets from the Portuguese* (7).

Mrs. Browning after her marriage are accessible, it is impossible in the space at our command to go through them in detail, deeply interesting as such a process would be. We can only extract from the letters some of the passages that seem to us to illustrate the characters of the writers.

Tennyson's 'Princess' is much discussed. English books were not easily procured at Florence, and before she has seen it herself Mrs. Browning asks Miss Mitford what she thinks of it. Here is her reply :

'The Princess' has fine things, but would certainly not have made a reputation. It is a poem of 150 pages, all in blank verse—enclosed within a setting of blank verse also—and the very songs introduced are of the same metre. The story is very unskilfully told, with an entire want of dramatic power, and full of the strangest words brought in after the strangest fashion. It begins in mockery, and becomes earnest as it goes on; but there are, as I said before, fine things in it.

After reading it, Mrs. Browning confesses that she is a good deal disappointed.

What woman (she says) will tell the great poet that Mary Wollstonecraft herself never dreamt of setting up collegiate states, proctorships, and the rest, which is a worn-out plaything in the hands of one sex already, and need not be *transferred* in order to be proved ridiculous? As for the poetry, beautiful in some parts, he never seems to me to come up to his own highest mark, in the rhythm especially. The old blank verse of Tennyson was a divine thing, but this new—mounted for certain critics—may please *them* perhaps better than it pleases *me*. Still the man is Tennyson, take him for all in all.

Mrs. Browning is not always to be relied on as a critic. Her impressions of 'In Memoriam,' however, are valuable, both as a piece of contemporary criticism, and as showing the consolation that she, like so many after her, and for the same reason, found in Tennyson's poem. Miss Mitford, on the contrary, did not give the work unqualified praise; she thought so many poems, all in one measure, and all on one subject, tiresome.

As to 'In Memoriam' . . . I really do disagree with you (writes Mrs. Browning), for the book has gone to my heart and soul; I think it full of deep pathos and beauty. All I wish away is the marriage hymn at the end, and *that* for every reason I wish away—it's a discord in the music. The monotony is a part of the position—the sea is monotonous, and so is lasting grief. Your complaint is against fate and humanity rather than against the poet Tennyson. Who that has suffered has not felt wave after wave break dully against one rock, till brain and heart, with all their radiances, seemed lost in a single shadow? So the effect of the book is artistic, I think. . . . What he [Tennyson] appeared to want, according to the view of many, was an earnest personality and direct purpose. In this last book, though of course there is not room in it for that exercise of creative faculty which elsewhere established his fame, he appeals heart to heart, directly as from his own to the universal heart, and we all feel him nearer to us—I do—and so do others.

Another of Mrs. Browning's criticisms has interest in connection with the extraordinary vogue in our own day of what we may perhaps be permitted to call the 'problem-novel.' Of Mrs. Gaskell's 'Mary Barton,' Mrs. Browning writes :

There is power and truth—she can make and she can pierce—but I wish half the book away, it is so tedious every now and then ; and besides, I want more beauty, more air from the universal world. These class books must always be defective as works of art.

On Wordsworth's death in 1850 the 'Athenæum' strongly recommended that Elizabeth Barrett Browning should succeed him in the office of Laureate, and her letters to Miss Mitford contain many references to the subject.

As for the Laureateship, it won't be given to *me*, be sure, though the suggestion has gone the round of the English newspapers—*Galigrani* and all—and notwithstanding that most kind and flattering recommendation of the *Athenæum* for which I am sure we should be grateful to Mr. Chorley. I think Leigh Hunt should have the Laureateship. He has condescended to wish for it, and has 'worn his singing clothes' longer than most of his contemporaries, deserving the price of long as well as noble service. Whoever has it will be of course exempted from Court lays ; and the distinction of the title and pension should remain for Spenser's sake, if not for Wordsworth's.

In another letter she says :

As for the laurel, in a sense he [Tennyson] is worthier of it than Leigh Hunt ; only Tennyson can wait—that is the single difference.

When in 1854 Mrs. Browning referred to the frigidness of the 'Athenæum' critic (Mr. Chorley, as she thinks) to her husband's poetry, she says :

He has been very good-natured to me, and it isn't his fault if I'm not Poet Laureate at this writing, and engaged in cursing the Czar in Pindarics very prettily.

Mrs. Browning's reverence for her art was one of her chief characteristics, and one common to all great poets. In the preface to the 1844 edition of her poems she wrote :

Poetry has been as serious a thing to me as life itself ; and life has been a very serious thing. . . I never mistook pleasure for the final cause of poetry ; nor leisure for the hour of the poet. I have done my work so far as work—not as mere hand and head work, apart from personal being—but as the completest expression of that being to which I could attain.

This seriousness, however, led her, as we hinted above, to overrate the importance and dignity attaching to members of the literary profession. Miss Mitford found less to praise in the literary life.

Dear Miss Mitford and I (writes Mrs. Browning) often quarrel softly about literary life and its toils and sorrows—she against, and I in favour of.

Indeed, Miss Mitford did her best to dissuade young people from taking up literature as a career. 'It is not a healthy occupation,' she declares, 'I always detested it; and nothing but the not being able to earn the money wanted by my parents in other ways could have reconciled me to the perpetual labour, the feverish anxieties, the miserable notoriety of such a career.'

But Mrs. Browning had good reasons for her point of view. Composition helped her through her great grief, and the possibility of literary occupation afforded her distraction. 'Part of me is worn out,' she wrote in 1841; 'but the poetical part—that is, the love of poetry—is growing in me as freshly and strongly as if it were watered every day.' But when Miss Mitford belittles the literary man or woman, Mrs. Browning has many wise things to say that have nothing to do with her personal feeling in the matter:

The leaning to the artistic nature without the strength of genius implies demoralisation in most cases, and it is this which makes your 'good-for-nothing poets and poetesses,' about which I love so to battle with you. Genius, I maintain always, you know, is a purifying power and goes with high moral capacities.

On a similar occasion she declares:

I am grateful to the man who has written a good book, and I recognise reverently that the roots of it are in him. And, do you know, I was not disappointed at all in what I saw of writers of books in London; no, not at all.

But perhaps her most notable utterance on this question is to be found in a letter written to Mr. Chorley in 1845:

It does appear to me wonderfully and mournfully wrong, when men of letters, as it is too much the fashion for them to do, take to dishonouring their profession by fruitless bewailings and gnashings of teeth; when, all the time, it must be their own fault if it is not the noblest in the world. Miss Mitford treats me as a blind witness in this case; because I have seen nothing of the literary world, or any other sort of world, and yet cry against her 'pen and ink' cry. It is the cry I least like to hear from her lips, of all others; and it is unworthy of them altogether. . . . There is something which is attractive to me, and which has been attractive ever since I was as high as this table, even in the old worn type of Grub Street authors and garret poets. Men and women of letters are the first in the whole world to me, and I would rather be the least among them than 'dwell in the courts of princes.'

In July 1850 Miss Mitford told Mrs. Browning that Henry Chorley had taken over the 'Ladies' Companion,' a weekly journal that was going to decay, and had asked her assistance. She promised to write for him a series of papers called 'Readings of Poetry, Old and New;' she described her general plan, and an-

nounced her intention of including an account of Mrs. Browning's poems. Mrs. Browning had a strange foreboding of evil, and hastened to reply; she expressed delight that Miss Mitford had been prevailed on to take up her pen again, but, at the same time, entreated her to ignore in the contemplated book 'the sins of my rawest juvenility.'

My dearest friend, *for the love of me*—I don't argue the point with you—but I beseech you humbly, kissing the hem of your garment, and by all sacred and tender recollections of sympathy between you and me, *don't* breathe a word about any juvenile performances of mine—*don't*, if you have any love left for me. Dear friend, 'disinter' anybody or anything you please, but don't disinter *me*, unless you mean the ghost of my vocation to vex you ever after. . . . I dare say you will think I have given too much importance to the rococo verses you had the goodness to speak of; but I have a horror of being disinterred, there's the truth!

Another fear was less personal; she hoped that Miss Mitford in her warm-heartedness and catholicity of taste would not unduly exalt 'little poets.' 'I have sighed aloud,' she concluded, 'over many names in the list.'

The work was published in book form in 1852 in three volumes, and entitled 'Recollections of a Literary Life.' In the first volume was a chapter headed 'Married Poets,' dealing with Elizabeth and Robert Browning. There Miss Mitford told the story of the drowning of Edward Barrett at Torquay. It occupies barely two pages of the twenty-five composing the chapter, and is related, it must be confessed, with all possible delicacy and restraint. The author introduces the personal details in connection with Mrs. Browning by stating that she is too dear to her as a friend to be spoken of merely as a poetess, and that her poems have won for her the love of so many persons she has never met, 'that it will gratify them without, I trust, infringing on the sacredness of private intercourse, to speak of her not wholly as a poetess, but a little as a woman.' And she continues:

I have so often been asked what could be the shadow that had passed over that young heart, that now that time has softened the first agony it seems to me right that the world should hear the story of an accident in which there was much sorrow but no blame.

Mrs. Browning was living at Paris at the time, and some one who was present at the first of a course of lectures on English literature, delivered by M. Philarète Chasles, reported to her that he had announced a future lecture on Elizabeth Barrett Browning, 'the veil from whose private life had lately been raised by Miss

Mitford.' Then a friend told the Brownings that the passage in question was quoted in the 'Athenæum' review of the book. Mrs. Browning, terribly upset by the idea of a publicity her sensitive soul abhorred, could not bear to read the notice herself, but asked her husband to read it out to her. This he did with omissions, at the same time assuring her that for the facts to be given at all, they could not possibly have been given with greater delicacy. Mrs. Browning's first feeling was one of vexation that she could not be angry with Miss Mitford; she could not help recognising the affectionate intentions, while deploring the obtuseness of understanding. At length she wrote to Miss Mitford describing the wretchedness the revelation had caused her. 'It will prove how hard it is for the tenderest friends to help paining one another since *you* have pained *me*.' Miss Mitford replied that she would rather the whole book had perished than that it should have given her friend a moment's pain. Whereupon Mrs. Browning acknowledged that her sensitiveness on these matters amounted almost to disease, and was doubtless very hard for others to comprehend.

It is thus clear that neither of the two friends understood the other's attitude in regard to outward expressions of feeling; a reserved nature rarely comprehends, and generally disapproves, unreserve in the expression of feeling. Miss Mitford invariably confessed her love for all that identified and individualised character, while Mrs. Browning was ever anxious that none of her poems should be taken by the public as referring to any emotional experience of her own.¹ But the episode in question need never have happened if Miss Mitford had remembered that the progress of the human race towards perfection would be in no way retarded if the private history of authors were allowed to remain in obscurity for a generation or so after their death.

Miss Mitford died January 11, 1855. She continued her correspondence with Mrs. Browning until about four weeks before that event.² The account of Miss Mitford's last days was given to Mrs. Browning by Mr. Ruskin, who had shown Miss Mitford every possible kindness and attention during her illness. In thanking him for his letter, Mrs. Browning says her final word on Miss Mitford:

¹ Cf. *Letter to Miss Blagden*, ii. p. 414.

² The last accessible letter from Miss Mitford to Mrs. Browning is dated 28 Aug. 1854, and from Mrs. Browning to Miss Mitford, 11 Dec. 1854.

It was a great warm, outflowing heart, and the head was worthy of the heart. People have observed that she resembled Coleridge in her granite forehead—something too, in the lower part of the face—however unlike Coleridge in mental characteristics, in his tendency to abstract speculation, or indeed his ideality. There might have been, as you suggest, a somewhat different development elsewhere than in Berkshire—not very different, though—souls don't grow out of the ground.

I agree quite with you that she was stronger and wider in her conversation and letters than in her books. Oh, I have said so a hundred times. The heat of human sympathy seemed to bring out her powerful vitality, rustling all over with laces and flowers. She seemed to think and speak stronger holding a hand—not that she required help or borrowed a word, but that the human magnetism acted on her nature, as it does upon men born to speak. . . .

But no, her 'judgment' was not 'unerring.' She was too intensely sympathetic not to err often, and, in fact, it was singular (or seemed so) what faces struck her as most beautiful, and what books as most excellent. If she loved a person, it was enough. She made mistakes one couldn't help smiling at, till one grew serious to adore her for it. And yet when she read a book, provided it was not written by a friend, edited by a friend, lent by a friend, or associated with a friend, her judgment could be fine and discriminating on most subjects, especially upon subjects connected with life and society and manners.

Mrs. Browning does not again mention Miss Mitford in her letters, a reticence that goes to prove, in a woman of Mrs. Browning's temperament, how deeply she felt the loss. In this brief sketch we have by no means exhausted our material; but we have said enough to indicate what an interesting light the newly published correspondence throws on the history of a memorable friendship.

ELIZABETH LEE.

WATERLOO.

A CONTEMPORARY LETTER.

THE following letter was written by the Hon. Katharine Arden, daughter of the first Lord Alvanley. With her mother and sister, she was resident in Brussels at the time of the great battle, and took an active part in nursing the wounded. The letter is addressed to her aunt, Miss Bootle Wilbraham, afterwards Mrs. Barnes. It is franked from Windsor to Ormskirk in Lancashire by Miss Arden's uncle, Mr. E. Bootle Wilbraham (afterwards Lord Skelmersdale), July 17, 1815.

Miss Arden's orthography and punctuation have been left unaltered.

Brussels, Sunday 9th.¹

MY DEAREST AUNT, I can assure you most truly that I did not require reminding, to fulfill the promise I had made you of writing, and every day since our return from Antwerp I have settled for the purpose, but what with visiting the sick, and making bandages and lint, I can assure you my time has been pretty well occupied. As my patients are, thank goodness, most of them now convalescent, I think the best way I can reward my dear Aunt's patience, is by giving her a long account of our hopes, fears and feelings, from the time the troops were ordered to march down to the present moment. (If you are tired with my long account, remember you expressed a wish in Mama's letter to hear *all* our proceedings). On Thursday the 15th of June, we went to a great ball that the Duchess of Richmond gave, at which we expected to see from Generals down to Ensigns, all the military men, who with their regiments had been for some time quartered from 18 to 30 miles from this town, and consequently so much nearer the frontiers; nor were we disappointed, with the exception of 3 Generals, every officer high in the army was to be there seen. Though for nearly ten weeks we had been daily expecting the arrival of the French troops on the Frontiers, and had rather been wondering at their delay, yet when on our arrival at the ball, we were told that the troops had orders to march at 3 in the morning, and that every officer must join his regiment

¹ Viz. the 9th of July.

by that time, as the French were advancing, you cannot possibly picture to yourself the dismay and consternation that appeared in every face. Those who had brothers and sons to be engaged, openly gave way to their grief, as the last parting of many took place at this most terrible ball; others, (and thank Heaven we ranked amongst that number, for in the midst of my greatest fears, I still felt thankfulness, was my prominent feeling that my beloved Dick¹ was not here), who had no near relation, yet felt that amongst the many many friends we all had there, it was impossible that all should escape, and that the next time we might hear of them, they might be numbered with the dead; in fact, my dear Aunt, I cannot describe to you my mingled feelings, you will however, I am sure understand them, and I feel quite inadequate to express them. We staid at this ball as short a time as we could, but long enough to see express after express arrive to the Duke of Wellington, to hear of Aides de Camp arriving breathless with news, and to see, what was much more extraordinary than all, the Duke's equanimity a *little* discomposed. We took a mournful farewell of some of our best friends, and returned home to anything but repose. The morning² dawned most lovelily, and before seven o'clock, we had seen 12,000 Brunswickers, Scotch, and English pass before our windows, of whom one-third before night were mingled with the dust. Mama took a farewell of the Duke as he passed by, but Fanny and myself, at last wearied out, had before he went, retired to bed. The first person that we saw in the morning brought us the news, that the advanced guard of the French had in the night come on as far as Genappe, 18 miles off, and had had several skirmishes with the Prussians. This intelligence, as you may suppose, did not tend to compose us, but still everything went on in quiet calmness, when, (Gracious heavens, never never shall I forget it), at three o'clock a loud cannonading commenced, which upon the ramparts was heard nearly as plain as we do the Tower guns in London; it went on without intermission till 8 o'clock, when it was thought to appear more distant, and therefore hopes were entertained that the French had retreated; nothing certain was known, but it was reported that the Prussians had been principally attacked, and were rather giving way, when the Highlanders and the regiments who had marched from here in the morning joined them, and compleatly repulsed the French.

¹ Her brother.² Viz. of Friday, June 16

So far the news was good, but still the English had fought, and what our loss was, nobody knew ; however, we bore up pretty well, till above [about] twelve o'clock, a gentleman (Mr. Leigh, of Lyme in Cheshire) came from off the field of battle, where he had been looking on, with the intelligence that there had been a dreadful battle, the Duke of Brunswick was killed, and that the Brigade of 1st Guards and the Highlanders were *literally cut to pieces*. I will not attempt to say what we felt, for it would be quite vain, I must only tell you that that Regiment of Guards contained all our greatest friends, independent of our having to regret them as Englishmen. The next morning, by six o'clock, Saturday 17th, numbers of Belgians and others of our *brave* Allies, came flying into the town, with the report that the French were at their heels, but this intelligence occasioned but a temporary fright, as a bulletin was published officially saying that we had gained a great victory, and the French were retreating, (neither of which was true). About ten o'clock the real horrors of war began to appear, and though we were spared hearing cannonading, yet the sights that we saw were infinitely more dreadful than anything we had heard the day before, I mean the sight of wounded. I must tell you before I proceed, that Sir James Gambier, (the Consul General to the Pays-bas, who is the best man that ever was), came to us about eight o'clock, and told us that there really had been a severe engagement, but that we had the advantage, that though the Guards had suffered most dreadfully, yet that their loss was not quite so great as had been reported, but that the Highlanders were literally nearly annihilated, after having performed prodigies of valour ; and very good proof had we how dreadfully they had suffered, by the numbers who were brought in here, literally cut to pieces. Our house being unfortunately near the gate where they were brought in, most of them passed our door ; their wounds were none of them drest, and barely bound up, the waggons were piled up to a degree almost incredible, and numbers for whom there was no room, were obliged, faint and bleeding, to follow on foot ; their heads, being what had most suffered, having been engaged with cavalry, were often so much bound up, that they were unable to see, and therefore held by the waggons, in order to know their road. Everybody, as you may suppose, pressed forward, anxious to be of some service to the poor wounded Hero's, but the people had orders that those who could go on should proceed to Antwerp,

to make room for those who were to follow, (dreadful idea), and therefore we could be of no further use to them than giving them refreshments as they passed. In the middle of the day we heard further particulars of the last night's battle, and if all danger had been removed far from us, which Heaven knows was very far from being so, we still should have felt nervous at the danger that had nearly befallen us. Conceive it having been run so near, that the French were within *ten minutes* of getting possession of the road to Brussels, which had they once gained, in all probability they would have reached the town in three hours. Providence, however, ordered it otherwise, and the Guards, who had marched from Enghien, 27 miles off, arrived at the lucky moment, and got possession of the road. They were shortly afterwards joined by the Highlanders, who some of them fought with their knapsacks on, having marched 20 miles, and accordingly were enabled to keep their ground against the French. The conduct of the English soldiers on that day was perfect, and would have been sufficient to have immortalized them, without the addition of the Sunday's battle, after which the Duke of Wellington said he should never feel sufficiently *grateful* to the Guards for their conduct on both days, which from the Duke means more than it would from anybody else. Our Hero, Wellington, who had been deceived with the intelligence that was given him, (for it is said that Bony had bribed most of his outposts), and had no idea that the French were so near, nor advancing in such force, was so distressed when he discovered the truth, that as usual totally regardless of his personal safety he was exposing himself in the most dreadful way, (I am speaking of the Friday's business at Quatre Bras, so named from four roads meeting), and already a party of French horse, having marked him out, were rushing on him with the greatest violence, when the Highlanders, who saw his danger, and it is said he never was in so great before, rushed between him and the French, and with the lives of hundreds, saved his still more precious one. On coming off the field, the Duke told some whom he met with, that their conduct had been noble, and he should make a good report of them; of the 92nd regiment, out of 700 men, but 150 remain to share the glory.

But to resume my narrative. We remained the whole of Saturday in great suspense, to know what the armies were about, and whether the French were really retreating as had been re-

ported; about four o'clock in the day, we were dreadfully undeceived, by being told from very good authority that instead of the enemy it was Lord Wellington who had retreated, and who with his whole army were within ten miles of the town; the reason given for his doing so, was that the Prussians had been attacked on the Friday evening whilst they were quietly cooking, and that having lost a tremendous number of men, Blucher had judged it prudent to retire, which being the case, he had left Lord Wellington's left flank so exposed, that it was impossible for him to remain where he was, and that he had therefore retreated to a strong position near Waterloo, whilst our cavalry were engaged in *playing* before them, to hide, as much as possible, their retreat from the French. It was likewise added, that it was to be *hoped* that the Prussians would rejoin the English, as at that present time the armies were near nine miles asunder, and that orders had been issued by the Duke for all the baggage to be sent *from* the army through this town, and for the wounded, if possible, to be moved from it. All this looked so like retreating on the town, that we were told we must have horses ready, and everything prepared to go at an instant's notice, which accordingly we commenced doing, and from that hour, 4 o'clock, till eight in the morning,¹ when we were fairly in Antwerp, were, I hope, the most harassing 16 hours I ever passed, or ever shall. From that time the baggage waggons passed in such quick succession, that they formed cavalcades through the town, as not only those who were ordered to go, but those who were desired to stay with the army, passed through, a general panic having seized all the officers' servants, by which means many have lost all they had, and everybody is minus something. About every half-hour a man was heard scampering down the street calling out that the French were coming; some, indeed, said they were at the gates, and though we knew that that could not be true, yet it was impossible to know how much foundation there was for saying so. About seven o'clock² our friend Sir James Gambier arrived to say that he hoped our things were nearly packed up, as though it was not necessary to go immediately, yet that he begged our things might be put to the carriage, as we might be obliged to start at an instant's notice, for it was known that the Prussians were not joined, and if Buonaparte were to attack that night, there was no knowing what the event might be. (We have since heard, that if

¹ Viz. of Sunday, June 18.

² Viz. 7 P.M. on Saturday, June 17.

he had done so, the tide of affairs would in all probability have turned completely *for* him, instead of being as it is now). After Sir James went, we went out to see what our friends intended doing; we found that some were gone, others going, and all were prepared for the worst. We accordingly agreed, that at the time Lady Charlotte Greville went, we would accompany her, as everybody told us if we waited for the worst we could never get away; and as we knew for certain that Buonaparte had promised his soldiers, after he had drawn 20,000,000 of francs from the town, that they should have three days pillage of it, which, as the enraged French soldiery are not the most kind-hearted possible, and as the English could expect no mercy for [from] them, we thought it madness to put ourselves in such danger, and accordingly everything was got ready. To encrease the horror and noise, about ten o'clock a most horrible storm of wind and rain came on, which lasted without intermission till three o'clock, when the wind abated, but the rain continued at intervals the whole of Sunday, to which the whole of our poor soldiers were exposed, with the additional hardship of having very little to eat, as they had been so continually changing their place for the last two days, that the officers have since told us, that for nearly eight and forty hours, *they* had barely two pounds of bread to eat; luckily, the Sunday morning, after the dreadful night they had passed, the common men had a double supply of spirits, which enabled them to fight as they did. The baggage waggons and fuyards continued passing, without intermission, and what with being deafened with the noise, and worn out with anxiety, we were in a terrible state of fatigue, when at $\frac{1}{2}$ past two,¹ Lady Charlotte sent to say the Mayor of the town had sent to advise all the English to quit the town, and that she was waiting for us. We accordingly joined her, and though we were very much impeded by the road being blocked up with waggons in which were numbers of the wounded, lying exposed to all the inclemency of the weather, and were several times in danger of being overturned, yet providentially we arrived safe at Antwerp about eight o'clock.² We found the greatest difficulty in getting a hole to put our heads in, but at last succeeded; Lady Charlotte proceeded on [to] the Hague immediately, but we remained to wait the event. We were told by many people that the rain would prevent them fighting, which

¹ Viz. 2.30 A.M. on Sunday the 18th.

² The distance from Brussels to Antwerp by road is about twenty-seven miles.

gave us ease for the time, and though we spent the day in great suspense, yet we were saved the dreadful indescribable anxiety of those who remained here; never can I be sufficiently thankful that we left this place. For the first time for three nights, Fanny and myself were enabled to sleep, and the next morning, Monday,¹ we were awoke, with the delightful news that a decisive victory had been obtained, and that the French were retreating in disorder. The account of killed and wounded which we then heard made us shudder; how much more dreadful was it, when the whole list was made out! There are 724 *English* officers killed and wounded, and nearly 11,000 common men, without Hanoverians.

The conduct of the English Infantry in the battle of Sunday was something so extraordinary, that Cambacères,² Buonaparte's A.D.C., who was taken, said, Buonaparte himself had said that it was useless to fight against such troops, nothing could make them give way. They were formed into hollow squares, upon which the French cavalry, particularly the Cuirassiers, who wear complete armour, poured down, but without any avail, not one of their squares were ever broken, though perhaps from being six or eight lines deep, they came at last to be only one. There is a little wood and a farm-house in the midst of the field of battle, which is called Hougemont, and which it was necessary for the English to maintain possession of; 500 of the Guards under Lord Saltoun & Col! Macdonnell were put into it, to defend it, and though they were attacked by above 10,000 French, and the Farm-house was set fire to, and burnt to the ground, yet our Invincible countrymen still maintained possession of it, and finally repulsed the enemy. Do not you feel, while you hear these accounts, that your national pride encreases every instant, and that you feel more thankful than ever that you are English born and bred? I have that sort of enthusiasm about me, that I almost feel inclined to shake hands with every soldier I meet walking in the streets. The light cavalry, I am sorry to say, for the first time in their lives, did not behave like Englishmen; the 7th Hussars and 23rd dragoons refused to advance when they were ordered, and poor Lord Uxbridge, who is as brave as a lion, and doats upon his regiment, (the 7th), went up to Lord Wellington in the midst of the engagement, and said, in the

¹ The 19th.

² Probably a nephew of the Second Consul of 1798,

bitterness of his heart, My cavalry have deserted me!¹ The heavy dragoons behaved admirably, and the horse Guards and Blue's who though they have been in Spain, were never before personally engaged, performed prodigies.—The Duke of Wellington has since said, that he never exerted himself in his life as he did on that day, but that notwithstanding the battle was lost three times; he exposed himself in every part of the line, often threw himself into the squares when they were about to be attacked, & did what it is said he never had done before, talked to the soldiers, and told them to stand firm; in fact, I believe without his having behaved as he did, the English would never have stood their ground so long, till the arrival of 30,000 fresh Prussians under Bulow finished the day, for as soon as the French saw them, they ran. The conduct of the French cavalry is represented as having been most beautiful, and nothing could have withstood them but our soldiers. The day after the battle, when the Duke had leisure to consider the loss he had sustained in both officers and men, he was most deeply affected, and Mrs. Pole, who breakfasted with him, said the tears were running down upon his plate the whole time. How much more noble the Hero appears when possessed of so much feeling! You ask how we like the Duke, and whether he is haughty? To men I believe he is, very often, but all his personal staff are extremely attached to him, and towards women his manners are excessively agreeable and very *galant*;² we like him vastly. We went a few days since to see the field of battle, and as everything offensive was removed, a most interesting [visit]; we went with an A.D.C. of Genl Cooke, (who, poor man, the General, has lost his arm), and who explained to us all about the battle.—I am quite ashamed, my dear Aunt, to think how much I have written; pray forgive me.

¹ The Duke, however, in his despatch, says: 'It gives me the greatest satisfaction to assure your Lordship that the army never, upon any occasion, conducted itself better. The division of Guards . . . set an example which was followed by all; and there is no officer nor description of troops that did not behave well.'

² His own joocular remark, however, may be recalled: 'Peel has no manners, and I have no small-talk.'

THE DRUMTOCHTY BACILLUS.

I PUT down 'The Bonny Briar Bush' with a sigh. The fire in my cosy little grate was getting low, and I stooped to replenish it. That grate has a special charm for me. There is a little hob on either side, and—more providential still—a tiny oven; so that I can not only warm myself a comforting glass on occasion, but also, if the trail of Keziah's silks sound suddenly over the landing, hide the same in a moment beyond risk of detection.

This particular evening my consort afore-mentioned was spending with the ladies who form what she calls her 'Crise.' Whether that name has any connection with some prospect of a general crisis, I cannot say; for me, beyond doubt, the air is always heavy with impending judgment on Keziah's return. But speculation is futile. For, on the only occasion when I ventured subtly to grope after enlightenment, Keziah with stern brevity stated that Crise was a German word and meant a Circumference. From which I infer that it alludes to the contour of the Crisers.

I pushed the lamp, which had been placed to throw its light over my shoulder, beyond reach of my elbow. Then, with a hitch to my cloth knees, I leaned back to reflect.

The hour was surely meant for meditation. My red hangings shut out noises and rain. The red cloth on my table showed up the bright decanter and its glass. The biscuit-tin was electro and glittered. A small kettle gently hissed on the hob. Hengist snored as he lay stretched on the hearthrug. What more could a man want to be peaceful? Keziah was not due till ten, and it was but eight-thirty. Yet my mind was a turmoil.

The fault was in that Thursday Penny Reading. I could not see my way out of it. In four days' time I had pledged myself—like an ass—to give 'The Sermon Taster' as a reading to our village. Now, as I have not the Scotch dialect, and can never see the point of their jokes, it might be thought that this reading could, in some ways, not fail to divert. It would, at any rate, I felt sure, make the Doctor—our local humourist—and the witty Rector's wife feel they had not come for nothing. And as for the fifteen members of Keziah's Circumference, they, having requisitioned this service, would keep themselves and their male adjuncts attentive.

It was not so much that which perplexed me. I had studied Mrs. Macfadyen for a fortnight. I had evolved a new and highly sonorous brogue, compounded partly of my native Somerset, partly of faint memories of a visit to Wakefield. That it would bewilder the yokels was certain. That it would infuriate our Scotch chemist was, unluckily, no less probable—and he was a man fond of remonstrance. Yet I felt I could brave even that. When pursued by a bull, it is marvellous with what nerve one clears ditches. Granted that an audible insult from Andrew Coltsfoot would at intervals cross the smooth tenor of my elocution, were it not better to leap even that bristling hedge of thorns than at home, closeted with Keziah, to hear the prelude of a month-long chant of obloquy?

It was thoughts such as these that had resolved me, some three weeks since, on compliance. On compliance, do I say? On enthusiasm, my dear Reader! On a prompt, an almost greedy, acquiescence.

But the sky had for three weeks slowly blackened. My wife's Crise had soaked our village in Drumtochty. It was but a few days since that she had ordered me to ask our dairywoman—the postmistress—for some 'caller eggs from the kailyard.' I had duly given the message, knowing nought of kailyards but that critics say they clack. Mrs. Stamp, a widow still austere and vigorous, looked at me for one moment, and then coldly urged that I should take a dose. I said I had been told to fetch a dozen, and they must be caller. 'Caller?' was her scornful rejoinder; 'if I was as caller as you, Mr. Whilks, I 'ld stop inside my shell till I was fledged.'

Not daring to go home without the eggs, I then tried the local grocer.

'Kailyard, sir?' said Mr. Reading suavely. 'Yes, sir. Jim, fetch them last year's heggs up from the brantub. You'll find these is right, sir; they'll 'most do as well's a chany hegg for settin'.'

Four had been cooked for breakfast next morning.

As the storm hailed thick and fast upon my head, the kindly gods sent a sudden diversion.

'There's a young wumman waitin' to speak to you, Mem,' said our housemaid—a raw-boned and staunch Caledonian—'which she says she hev a word to you from her Meenister.'

'Hech, sirs!' said Mrs. Whilks most majestically, and sailed from the room. I leaped at one bound through the window, crept

round the back premises, and was out on the road, hatless, in a twinkling. I went round to Mrs. Palmer, my one comfort.

Mrs. Palmer is a woman of few words—being therein, as saith Holy Writ, a gift of the gods—but she is mighty clever at helping a man over a stile, nor was it any fault of hers that her late husband made his fortune in spirits.

‘Mrs. Palmer,’ I gasped, ‘for what did they unite us with the Scotch? They are breaking up my happy hearth and home with their accursed twaddle. Here’s Keziah trying to change Hengist’s name to McTaggart, and calling me “Whinnie” for honest Whilks.’

My philosopher looked at me with her keen, bright eyes. I have heard some of the Crisers call her Consciously Dramatic. In respect that she realises a situation sooner than most people, the remark may apply.

‘Have some tea, my good friend,’ she said calmly. She poured me out a delicious cup of the Cheerer, and motioned me to an old oak settle that stood by the breakfast-table.

‘What has Keziah been doing to you, Whilkie?’ asked Mrs. Palmer.

‘It would take me an hour to tell you,’ I replied.

Repose was beginning to steal over me, and I felt not averse to spinning a long yarn to my delightful protector.

But I have always found it takes two to spin a yarn.

‘You must be quick,’ said Mrs. Palmer. ‘Baking day! And I cannot give you more than five minutes.’

She stood with her comely hand on her hip and regarded me. I sat straight up and held out my arm, terminated by the cup, which rattled in its saucer. ‘Mrs. Palmer,’ I said—roused, like David, to speak with my tongue—‘to-day’s Saturday. On Thursday next is that confounded Penny Reading. Keziah has made me promise to give “The Sermon Taster;” and I’ll not do it, Mrs. Palmer, I’ll not do it. I don’t mind Keziah tasting every sermon that she hears, and I don’t mind the curate glaring at me like Leviticus because she makes me take down notes while he is preaching. And I don’t mind her telling the Crisers I’m a Mystic. But I do mind it when she makes me play the blatant ass to all the village, and when I hear Mrs. Ridley is inviting a special party to the rectory for next Thursday. I may be a Mystic, and I may have had visions, but that’s no reason why a man shouldn’t be allowed to see in front of his nose.’

Mrs. Palmer's black eyes twinkled.

'Go home, Whilkie,' she said; 'talk all the Scotch to your wife that you know. Study "The Sermon Taster" night and day. And when the evening comes, you will have a mystic vision just as your reading is due. I'll get a private word in with the Rector before Thursday, so there 'll not be any break in the programme. He's an honest man, and Mrs. Ridley gives in to him.'

I wrung my friend's hand and departed.

But that Monday night, as I watched my fire, and thought over my talk with Mrs. Palmer, I was worried. To tell truth, visions are not in my line. Besides, the Mystic had his wrestlings with the devil; and one should surely know some texts before beginning. Also, I felt afraid that the spiritual conflict might ultimately be, not with that Principality, but with Mrs. Whilks. And should I not have to keep the vision up when we got home? And suppose she only postponed my reading for a fortnight, and then made me give it after all! The more I thought it all out the more I felt afraid. To give 'The Sermon Taster' meant twenty minutes in the Inferno; but to come home without giving it meant an entire Divine Comedy with Keziah. I may say that I have tried both, and know which is worse.

There seemed to me one possible means of escape. Could I prevail on Andrew Coltsfoot to put me up to the right pronunciation? It did now and then happen that he was not disagreeable. Besides, it would not do so badly if he were, for he is always most Scotch when abusive, and I might find that the accent stuck. I pulled myself together with a sigh. I hid the little kettle in the coal-box; turned down the lamp—because Keziah will not come in when it smells; got into a top-coat, and turned up my trousers.

The rain poured off my umbrella in a cataract. Suddenly two balls of coloured flame pierced the darkness, and Coltsfoot's jar of poppies gleamed behind them. The maid showed me into a little back parlour.

A gaunt face, wearing no dubious scowl, next appeared in the doorway, waiting silent for me to begin.

'Mr. Coltsfoot,' I said, clearing my throat, 'I apologise for intruding on you. This is a delicate matter. I am taking you into my confidence. You may consider that it is of the nature

of a favour. In point of fact, I'—words failed me—Keziah says Mystics often feel that way.

'You are a fact, Mr. Whilks,' said the chemist, in his driest professional English. 'If you are also of the nature of a favour you should hardly be out this wet evening. They're unsubstantial.'

'And incomprehensible, eh?' I added with a jovial laugh. For if he wished to be witty with St. Athanasius, was it for me to object?

Coltsfoot looked at me a little oddly.

'Did you call here by any chance for some soda-water, Mr. Whilks?' he inquired.

'Na, na! my dear friend Andy,' I said waggishly. 'Maybe it wes mair a drap of whuskey that I wud be wanting. Ye'll be telling me how to shape my moo to the braw Scots tongue of ye, Andy, my man.'

The chemist pointed silently to a chair, and under the gleam of his steel-grey eyes I sat down meekly. He then closed the door. Standing in front of me, with his arms straight down to his sides, he delivered himself of the following remarks.

'Whether you're drunk or sober, Mr. Whilks, I have no wish to inquire. You will be outside this house in two minutes, and can then think it over. Meanwhile, may I plainly assure you that if ever you dare to give me another dose of this insolent mimicry, you will have reason to avoid Scotch for the future.'

'I have much reason to avoid it at present,' I said helplessly.

'Ye bletherin' old idiot!' muttered Mr. Coltsfoot.

'Say that again!' I implored. Oh, if he would but use a few more of those words!

The chemist turned sharp round, pealed the bell, and stalked out of the room. The small servant appeared and held the door open. I walked downstairs and out of the house.

Before I had gone many paces, there appeared the well-known form of Mrs. Graves. She is the wife of our senior churchwarden; a Devonshire woman, with a long and sallow face. Keziah had lately been telling me that Mrs. Graves was a second Marget Howe. I wondered, as she drew near in the downpour, whether Marget Howe wore a circular waterproof and boots like a section of plank, and, if so, whether Drumsheugh was not a man less fastidious than faithful.

'Aweel, Whilkie lad!' said Mrs. Graves, 'it's braw weather the nicht. I've come this varra meenut from the Crisers.'

'I've been this varra meenut to the chemist,' I rejoined—for I was sulky now, and inclined to be quarrelsome—'and he's put me this varra meenut on the pavement.'

'Hech, sirs!' said Mrs. Graves.

At that word I rushed past her and ran.

At my door stood Keziah. She eyed me.

'I've been round to Andrew Coltsfoot, Keziah,' I remarked, 'having a lesson in Scotch.'

Mrs. Whilks did not answer.

'And on my way back,' I went on perseveringly, 'I met Marget Howe.' My better half was still silent. When we stood in the lobby, she turned to me.

'Mrs. Graves,' said my consort impressively, 'is such a woman as the likes of you are not fit to take her name on your lips.'

'That's why I called her something different,' I said humbly.

'The reason why you called her Marget Howe,' continued Mrs. Whilks, after another awful pause, 'is because you are not fit to call her anything. It is because she is a woman in a thousand. It is because she knows the sorrows of every one, and can comfort them all, having buried each in turn of her own relations. It is because she finds her way to every household. It is because, whatever your private sorrow of your inmost heart may be, there will be Susan Graves a' hammering at your door, nor will you have the strength to keep her out. It is because——' But here Keziah sank down on the hall bench, drowned in tears. While she held her kerchief to her eyes, I flew softly upstairs and slipped with breathless haste into my den.

The situation was desperate. I had failed to acquire the Scotch dialect. For playing the Mystic's part next Thursday I felt, if possible, less nerve than before. The Drumtochty fever raged unabated. Indeed the conduct, not only of Susan Graves but of my wife, would seem to show that the Crisers had just come from a rare innings in that favoured village. Keziah had really been taken rather worse than usual. What would come of it? What would become of me? Well—there comes, I think, a tide in the affairs of some men when their only course is not to take the flood, but to let the flood take them. And the sooner it washes them out of sight, the better. Certainly, I felt no longer either the spirit or the ingenuity to wrestle with my fate. Let things take their course. What would it matter if I were hissed from the platform next Thursday? What would it matter if I

refused to read, and Keziah had hysterics for a fortnight? What did anything matter? Whereupon I took my kettle from the coalbox, stirred the fire to a glorious blaze, and soon lay back luxurious in my chair—a pleasant glow without me and within.

Upon my dreams stole a strange sense that Keziah was present. I had the wit not to open my eyes; I just lay still and listened. In this half-waking state my mind harked back to the last trail of thought. What did anything matter? Let her think me lying drunk, if she liked! Let her see the flask of hollands on the table! Let her smell the faint aroma from my tumbler! I was utterly reckless.

‘He’s hevin’ a veesion,’ whispered my wife. ‘He’s in a trance! Oh Losh! that the Crisers were here! Eh, but I’ll just sit down and write ony bit word he may say, and show it Susan to-morrow. She shan’t twit me again with not having a byordinar man to my husband. She shall see he’s convairsed with the Powers. If it wesna sae late, I ’ld be fetching the whole Crise forbye.’ A sepulchral groan came from my lips. To be the centre of that seraphic Circumference!

‘That was a groan!’ whispered Keziah again. ‘It’s a vision! He’s bound to speak soon.’ There was no mistaking the profound excitement in her voice. Already her smattering of Scotch was failing her, under this pressure. The wild thirst to prove to Mrs. Graves that I was a Mystic was driving affectation from her thoughts. I heard the rustle of silk as she crept to my bureau and procured thence a pencil and paper. Then she softly sat down.

I was busy collecting my wits: help me, Mother of Invention!

I now heaved a deep sigh. Mrs. Wilks moved in her chair. I was racking my brains for texts, but none would come. Then I tried, vainly, to recall the details of the Wrestling. I turned uneasily from side to side, and cleared my throat.

‘He’s going to speak!’ was breathed with suppressed eagerness. ‘He always moves like that when he’s talking asleep.’

‘Awa wi’ thee, Deil!’ I now muttered, pitching my voice in a hollow key. I heard the pencil drop, and Keziah give a short gasp as she picked it up. ‘Thou shalt na mak me forswear my ain soul wi’ this foul junketting!’ I continued. As Keziah’s fluttered breathing came to my ears, accompanied by the scratching of the pencil, my spirits rose. All the dialects I had ever

chanced to hear, all the statements our curate had ever made about the Adversary, Mrs. Palmer's reckless counsels, my own desperate plight, my wife's half-crazed excitement, the lingering influence of my tumbler-full of hollands—all rose in serried rank to fight my battle. I would conquer or die for it!

'What is this cursed thing thou 'rt whisperin' to me?' I asked with vehemence. 'To mak' light of a meenister of releegion? To read the sinfu' fleers of a maist impious woman? Avaunt thee, Satan!'

Keziah's sobs came stifled through her pocket handkerchief. I relapsed for a while into spasmodic groans, for her pencil had not yet overtaken my eloquence. She gave a little gulp as she finished.

'To think,' she said softly, 'that only myself has known it all this time! And I with a husband what has visions! Oh Thomas!'

'Dinna come round me wi' calling me Tammas,' I continued to the Ghostly Enemy, and my courage waxed higher. 'What for wouldst thou be knowing my name? I've nowt to do wi' thee. Hie thee back to thy frens in Drumtochty—— Dinna speak o' that cursed wumman, Susan Graves—— If she's sold her soul to thee, that's nae reason why I should, nae, nor Keziah naether—— So thee can e'en gang thy ain gait——'

'Oh Susan, Susan!' murmured Mrs. Whilks; and I heard the splash of tears upon the paper.

Was Mrs. Palmer's dramatic consciousness like to mine?

I now started up in my chair.

'I tell thee, thou foul fiend,' I cried aloud, shaking my fist, 'I'll not yield to thee. Thou 'ldst hurl me to perdition if I 'ld let thee. Do I not see the sheep and the goats all ranged for judgment? And is na yon Drumsheugh amang the goats, and Marget Howe, and Jamie Soutar, and the auld wife Macfadyen? Thou shalt na drag me by the tail, thou infamous warlock, and set me amang that bletherin' blasted crew. Juist answer me this question—Am I a goat?'

As I hurled this challenge, Hengist threw back his head and howled. I could hear that Keziah rose hastily, clutching her chair. I now opened my eyes and turned them wildly on Mrs. Whilks, and shook my fist at her as she reeled with terror.

'Am I a goat, thou black nightmare, that com'st to drag me down to the depths o' hell—am I a goat?'

'Lord only knows, Thomas,' quavered my poor consort, beside herself with fright, 'but I wish you 'ld be a reasonable creature and come to bed.'

'Woman,' I said sternly, allowing myself to fade by slow degrees into common day, 'what are you doing in my room?'

'I came to fetch you, Thomas,' faltered Keziah.

'Mrs. Whilks,' I observed deliberately, after pausing a full minute, 'if you wish to imperil your immortal soul by creeping into the room of a man who has visions, and overhearing things that a man mayn't tell of, you may do so, but the guilt will not be mine.'

Keziah sat down in her chair and sobbed helplessly.

I took up 'The Briar Bush,' and put it into her hands.

'Take that book,' I commanded, 'and put it where I may neither see it nor hear it henceforth and for ever, Amen.'

She took it up meekly and crept from the room.

Hengist and I sat and chuckled—in English.

H. MEYER HENNE.

ANCIENT METHODS OF SIGNALLING.

WITH a few notable exceptions—such as local pneumatic services and certain well-known methods and appliances for military, geodesical, and maritime purposes—all rapid messages to a distance are nowadays transmitted by the electric current. During the last forty years at least, the very word ‘telegraphy’ (= writing, or describing, afar) has been practically monopolised by the electro-magnetic system of signalling, although first of all applied to another.

It may now be interesting to review some of the earlier devices employed by mankind for similar purposes. The fabulous honour of being the first inventor of the art of signalling is bestowed by certain classical writers upon the ingenious Palamedes. This hero may have introduced improvements in detail, but it is certain that, long before the time of the Trojan war, the Egyptians and Assyrians, if not the Chinese and other nations of remote antiquity—of whom monumental records alone remain to us—had developed regular methods of signalling by fire, smoke, flags, &c.

The Great Wall built by the Chinese ages ago, and 1,500 miles long, is studded with towers. Between these signals were interchanged when troops had to be collected in order to resist attack at any point threatened by the Tartars or ‘outer barbarians.’ By Major Boucheræder and others it has been considered that the huge tower of Babel was erected for similar, as well as for a number of different purposes. That is to say, for the signalling, not necessarily of any particular words or sentences, but of expected events, imperial decrees, military orders, and other matters intended to be understood through conventional signals, whether of lights, flags, semaphores, or other devices, by all the motley host of nationalities and languages of which the Chaldean Empire was composed.

Many ingenious and more or less scientific systems of signalling, both visual and acoustic, have been employed in different parts of the world, ever since history began to be written. How long before that, we cannot tell. The term telegraph (from the Greek *τῆλε*, *afar*, and *γράφειν*, *to write*) came

into common use in France and elsewhere several decades before the invention of the electro-magnetic system.

Probably, the simplest and earliest form of long-distance signalling is that by beacon fires. In climates where the atmosphere is usually clear, and the country not too flat, this method can generally be relied upon for forwarding clear signals of smoke by day and light by night. Thus, in Holy Writ,¹ Jeremiah refers to the former and Isaiah to the latter; indeed, the use of beacons may almost be said to be 'as old as the hills' on whose tops they are placed. Relays of torch-holders were also frequently employed by the ancients.

According to Æschylus, the taking of Troy—after its ten years' siege by Agamemnon three thousand years ago—was made known in Greece to his wife, Queen Clytemnestra, by beacons lighted on Mounts Ida, Athos, Cithæron, and other intervening heights. Fire signals were also used by Mardonius in the time of Xerxes, and are mentioned frequently in Thucydides. We read that signalling by light was turned to a very tender purpose by Hero, the beautiful priestess of Venus, in her love for Leander, to whom she displayed a lamp in her tower at Sestos whenever he was to swim across the Hellespont from Abydos to see her. But one night the lamp was blown out—he was drowned, and she then threw herself into the waves. Theseus, in the Argonautic expedition, adopted another form of visual signals, namely, the colours of the sails hoisted, but killed his father through a telegraphic error; for, flushed with victory, he forgot his signal, and old Ægeus, seeing the black sail, and feeling sure his son was dead, flung himself into the sea.

It was these wideawake people also who employed the *clepsydra*, a very clever contrivance, for night communication afar. This invention was attributed to the tactician Arnias. It consisted of a tall vessel containing water, which was let out slowly by a tap at the bottom; on the water floated a cork disk, carrying a gauge with divisions down the side, and on each division a separate sentence was inscribed. Each signalling point had one of these contrivances; and on a light being shown from one station it was acknowledged by the other, and each *clepsydra* opened at the moment. When the surface of the water receded to the sentence required, the signalling station again showed a

¹ Jeremiah vi. 1; Isaiah xxx. 17.

light, when the other stopped the outflow and read the words inscribed at the water level upon the corresponding gauge.

Hannibal erected watch-towers in Africa and Spain to signal from; and whenever the Romans extended their conquests in Gaul, Spain, or elsewhere, they made use of similar signalling devices. A representation of one of their telegraph towers is engraved on Trajan's Column. These towers, the ruins of which are still to be seen in various parts of France, very likely suggested the idea of aerial telegraphy to the brothers Chappe and other inventors of the eighteenth century. But for the absence of field-glasses, the Romans might, and not improbably would, have developed the same (semaphore) system as that of their modern successors.

Polybius perfected an alphabetical method of camp signals, supposed to have been originated by Cleoxenes. The letters of the alphabet were divided into five or six sections, with columns corresponding to each. The number of the letter at a given moment signalled from each column was indicated by the number of torches held up. Julius Africanus describes a somewhat similar system in which the letters were divided into three sections only. Thus α , β , γ , δ , ε , ζ , η , and θ , were indicated by 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, and 7 torches respectively, on the *left*; in the second section came ι , κ , λ , &c., indicated by 1, 2, 3, &c., torches in the *middle*; and in the third section, π , ρ , &c., = 1, 2, &c., on the *right*.

Among conventional military signals of a simple order were the red tunic, which signified an order to prepare for battle and take a meal first, and the bloody or blood-red spear, giving permission to sack and devastate.

The use of mirrors to flash signals by the sun's rays from one port to another dates back to the times of the Pharaohs. The Persians are said to have considerably developed it for purposes of war; Leseurre's heliograph (first used in Algeria), upon which the more successful systems of Begbie and Mance have been founded, was thus simply a revival of very ancient methods.

Shortly before the French Revolution, Claude Chappe, at Angers, invented a semaphore telegraph, consisting of relays of towers surmounted by movable arms. This plan, with modifications, was adopted in France, England, and other countries. In August 1794, the first of Chappe's lines was completed between Paris and Lille, and on September 1 at noon the welcome news of the re-

capture of the town of Condé from the Austrians was transmitted by it from Lille, and announced by Carnot to the deputies in Paris the same evening. The inventor, who was the first person that received the title of telegraph engineer (*ingénieur-télégraphe*), as head of a telegraphic department in the military service of the first Republic, was succeeded in this office by his brothers, Ignatius and René: during the Directory, the Empire, and the reigns of Louis XVIII. and Charles X., numerous lines of this description were constructed in France. Louis-Philippe secured the introduction of the electric telegraph; but both systems were in use down to the time of the Crimean war, after which the semaphore was finally abandoned.

The most important forms of visual signals that are still employed for communicating over (comparatively) long distances are the heliograph¹ and the naval flash-lights. Flag-signals and semaphores are still, of course, constantly used for moderate distances, and, with the aid of the telescope, are found very effective as far as the earth's curvature and the state of the atmosphere permit. All these forms of signalling have been considerably developed of late years for military, naval, and general maritime purposes; but further allusion to them in their improved state scarcely comes within our present scope.²

Acoustic telegraphy, in the full sense of the term, cannot be said to have existed before the age of the electric sounder and telephone. Not to any practical purpose, that is to say, for string telephones, water telephones, and tube telephones have never been worked over long distances ($\tau\eta\lambda\epsilon$) in a constant and effective manner. In connection with our present object, it is perhaps sufficient to mention a few of the chief devices by which mankind are known (or said) to have succeeded formerly in establishing more or less satisfactory signalling arrangements by means of sound.

The historian Diodorus relates that a king of Persia communicated from Suza to Athens by relays of sentinels, planted at regular intervals, who transmitted his messages from one to another

¹ The best known form of which is that invented by Sir Henry Mance, C.I.E.

² An exhaustive paper on the various modern methods of visual telegraphy was read by Captain (now Vice-Admiral) P. H. Colomb, R.N., before the Society of Telegraph Engineers in 1872 and 1873 (see its Journal, vols. i. and ii.) To this, and other more recent papers and publications, the reader interested in the subject, as now developed, must be referred.

by *shouting* across the intervening spaces. Relays of shouters were also employed by the Gauls. By this means, according to Cæsar, tidings of the massacre of Romans in the early morning at Orleans was conveyed to Auvergne—a distance of forty leagues—the same evening. In point of speed, this plan may have been an improvement upon couriers, but can hardly have been as reliable. In Mexico, under the Aztec *régime*, the latter system appears to have been developed to quite an elaborate extent.

In the way of long distance voice-transmitting, the *stentorophonic* tube, said to have been employed by Alexander the Great, deserves mention among the scientific wonders of antiquity. By means of this instrument—so at least it was alleged—the great commander succeeded in making his orders heard four leagues off. According to the late Monsieur A. L. Ternant,¹ a drawing of this instrument is believed to exist in the Vatican. In more recent times, similar developments of the speaking trumpet and tube are attributed to the Chevalier de Morland and others.

The direct transmission of sound-vibrations, without the intermediary of an electric current—that is to say, through solid matter and over long distances—was constantly attempted, and sometimes with a considerable degree of success, long before the present century. Robert Hooke describes a string telephone which he constructed and employed about the year 1667. Quite primitive tribes, in the East and in America, are said to have used similar devices. In Europe they have been generally treated rather as toys than as practical instruments; but there are instances—*e.g.*, among hunters in the Pyrenees—where they have been turned to very useful account.

In 1782, Dom Gantey made some experiments on the propagation of sound in the pipes which carried water from the pump at Chaillot. It was stated that 'with three hundred pipes of a thousand "toises" each, despatches could be sent one hundred and fifty leagues in fifty minutes.' In 1783 he published at Philadelphia a prospectus which shows that he had proposed to the Académie des Sciences absolutely new methods of sending a despatch with great speed. The two discoveries were examined by the Académie. MM. Condoret and Milly, the commissioners appointed to report upon them, stated on June 15, 1782, that 'as regards the first discovery, the means proposed appeared

¹ For some years manager of the Eastern Telegraph Company's station at Marseilles.

to them practical, ingenious, and novel; that it had no resemblance to any methods previously proposed, and that by it a signal might be given at a distance of thirty leagues in a few seconds and without intermediate stations; that the apparatus would be neither expensive nor cumbersome, and that they had appended to Dom Gantey's paper the grounds of their belief in the possibility of the method, which the author wished to keep secret.' This secret was, in fact, placed under the seal, and may be still remains in that condition in the archives, of the Académie des Sciences. It would be interesting to know whether Dom Gantey's secret is at the present time kept inviolate by the Académie.

Among other not very well-known inventions is that of M. Sudré, mentioned in the 'Encyclopédie Universelle.' As the inventor only died within quite modern times (1862), and as his system was apparently applicable to electro-magnetic apparatus, it does not properly come within our present scope. Its peculiarity, however, was his use of the notes of the musical scale, for distinguishing different letters of the alphabet. His widow published a description of the invention, with other memoranda; but it appears that the authorities have never been induced to give it a trial.

Of curiosities in signalling, both ancient and modern—for those who care to seek them—there is indeed an abundance, if not a positive plethora.

CHARLES BRIGHT.

THE STRANGE STORY OF MADAME LAFARGE.

AFTER the decision in the Maybrick case had been given, in August 1889, there was much dissatisfaction expressed, both by members of the legal profession and by the general public, as to the result. Those acquainted with the annals of medical jurisprudence recognised many points of similarity between this case and that of Madame Lafarge ; but though there have been frequent attempts made to have Mrs. Maybrick's case re-examined, the strangely romantic story of Madame Lafarge has not been completely re-told, nor has its bearing upon the Maybrick tragedy been plainly indicated. Without seeking to make comparisons between the two incidents, or attempting to twist them into a forced resemblance, it will be sufficient here to relate the life history of Madame Lafarge, leaving the reader to draw his own inferences. The facts of the case have here been put into consecutive order, the chief authorities quoted being two official accounts of the trial, published in 1840, and the autobiography of the culprit, issued in the following year. All the actors in the tragedy have departed from this earthly scene long ago, but the Lafarge case still remains one of the unsolved mysteries of crime.

Marie Fortunée Cappelle, afterwards Madame Lafarge, was the daughter of Captain Cappelle, of the Imperial Artillery, and the granddaughter of the famous Madame de Genlis, who was closely associated with the Duc d'Orléans and his son Louis-Philippe. She was born in 1816 in Picardy. Her father died when she was quite young, and her mother shortly afterwards married for the second time, but did not long survive this new union. The children of Captain Cappelle were left to the charge of the relatives of his widow's second husband, and Marie Cappelle was ultimately brought to the home of an aunt, whose husband, M. de Martens, moved in the upper ranks of society. Before Marie had been three days in the house of her new protector, he had determined to relieve himself of the burden of her support by negotiating a marriage for her. With this purpose De Martens applied to M. Foy, a matrimonial agent in Paris, who placed her name on his list of marriageable girls. She was then twenty-three years of age, and is described as not greatly blessed

with beauty, and possessed of a moderate fortune amounting to 80,000 francs. In a very short time M. Foy was able to introduce Mlle. Cappelle to a prospective husband in the person of Charles Pouch Lafarge, an ironmaster and proprietor of forges at Glandier, in the department of Corrèze. Lafarge was in possession of a considerable fortune, almost entirely invested in his works. His father had been a justice of the peace (*juge de paix*) in the canton of Vigéois, but had died some time before the story begins, leaving his widow to take charge of his son's house. The family to which he belonged was highly esteemed in the district, and Lafarge himself was endowed with qualities which made him beloved by all who surrounded him. He had been once married, but his wife had died shortly after the union, and he found it expedient to marry a second time, partly because of his affectionate nature, and partly that he might obtain some money through his second wife to increase his business.

In the circumstances Lafarge applied to M. Foy, and obtained a recommendation to Marie Cappelle. Some inquiries were made on her part by her friends regarding his position and prospects, and as these were considered satisfactory, the marriage—a purely commercial transaction—was concluded, and on August 15, 1839, the newly wedded pair set out from Paris for Glandier. The incidents of the eventful journey have been related in two versions. The one is the story told by the Procureur-Général in the *acte d'accusation* used in the trial of Madame Lafarge for murder; the other is the record which that hapless woman wrote (or caused to be written) detailing her life. From these two accounts a fairly accurate idea of the circumstances may be obtained. It was a loveless marriage, entered into from sordid motives on both sides. Lafarge merely wanted to obtain possession of his wife's dowry, while Marie Cappelle wished to escape from the servile position she occupied in the house of her aunt, and was dazzled by the accounts she had received of her husband's wealth and position. According to her statement, she was disgusted with his brutality long before they reached Glandier; and she describes herself as utterly ignorant of wifely duties and marital relations—an assertion which is hardly credible as applied to a Frenchwoman then twenty-three years of age. Ere they arrived at Glandier a painful scene occurred. The young wife refused to share her husband's bedroom in the hotel at Orleans where they put up; she became hysterical, and locked herself within her

own apartment. She kept this seclusion for some time, and while thus estranged she wrote a letter to her husband in which she disclosed a pretended *affaire de cœur* which seems to have had no foundation in fact. After they reached their own house, however, they were reconciled, and there seemed to be every likelihood of their spending a happy wedded life together. Madame Lafarge afterwards stated that the cause of their reunion was that the kind and affectionate manner in which her husband treated her made her consider it a duty to render him as happy as possible. On the other hand, her accuser declared that she had resolved, even while on the wedding trip, to accomplish the death of her husband, towards whom she had conceived a violent animosity, and only delayed the project until she should obtain from him a will in her own favour.

The Lafarge family circle at Glandier included the widowed mother of the ironmaster, his sister, a lady friend of Lafarge called Mlle. Le Brun, and an acquaintance of that lady named Emma Ponthieu. Lafarge's chief clerk, Denis Barbier, who afterwards appeared in a rather ambiguous position in the case, was a frequent visitor at the house, and had liberty to walk through the place without restriction. On her first introduction to the family mansion, Madame Lafarge saw that both she and her relatives had been grossly deceived as to the fortune of her husband. In her evidence, given, according to the French system, at her trial, she said:—'When I arrived at Glandier, in place of that charming country house with which they had lured me, I found a ruined and dilapidated habitation. I found myself alone, shut up in a large chamber that was to be mine for life. I lost my reason—I had an idea of travelling in the East—I thought of all these things—the contrast—my imagination was excited—I was so wretched that I would have given the whole world to have got away.' After this, however, she became reconciled to her lot, as she found she could not alter it, and she devoted herself to securing the welfare of her husband. He had discovered, or believed he had discovered, a new method of smelting iron; but he had not sufficient money at his command to perfect his process. On his representations, she bestowed upon him all her fortune, and even wrote letters, at his dictation, to some of her wealthy friends, imploring them to aid him in his project by their money and influence.

With these letters in his possession, Lafarge went to Paris

in December, 1839, and called on his wife's relatives. While he was at the capital making arrangements to have his patent rights secured, his wife had her portrait drawn by a young lady-artist at Glandier, and she determined to send it to her absent husband. It was put in a box, and along with it were placed some cakes made by the Widow Lafarge, together with a tender and affectionate letter. When this box left Glandier, after being packed and sealed by Madame Lafarge in the presence of several witnesses, it contained five small cakes, the portrait, and the letter. When it reached Paris, there was only one large cake inside. Lafarge partook of this cake, and soon after he became excessively ill, and was compelled to return home. He arrived at Glandier on January 5, 1840, and, after severe sickness, he died there on the 14th of that month. It was found that he had made a will in favour of his wife, and that she had made a similar disposition of her property to him in case she should predecease him. Very shortly after his death, Madame Lafarge was apprehended on a charge of poisoning her husband, by administering arsenic to him during his illness. When the house of the deceased was searched by the officers of justice, certain diamonds were found, which were supposed to have been stolen from the Vicomtesse de Léotaud by Madame Lafarge before her marriage. She was therefore charged with the double crime of theft and murder.

Madame Lafarge was apprehended about the middle of January, 1840, but her trial did not take place till July 9 following. The first charge, that of theft, was proceeded with, despite the demand of her advocate to have the graver crime first investigated; and, though she appealed against the procedure, the case was tried in her absence, and she was found guilty of theft. On September 3, while this judgment was still under appeal, she was brought to trial on the charge of murder, and the proceedings that resulted are unparalleled in the records of jurisprudence. The method of criminal procedure which prevails in France is so different from that pursued in this country, that readers unacquainted with its peculiarities will hardly credit that it could exist in a civilised nation. The main object of the Public Prosecutor is not to expiscate the truth, but to convict the accused, and the prisoner is interrogated and cross-examined at various times, to discover whether any incautious admission or apparent prevarication may be used against him at the trial. Then this inquisitorial system is resumed in open court, and the

judge, with written copies of the previous examinations before him, strives, by every system of logical fencing, to entrap the unwary, and possibly innocent, prisoner into contradictory statements. The sole purpose of these trained lawyers to prove that the accused is guilty, and to effect this end they set the sharpest wits against those of the suspected person, seeking by every means to convict him out of his own mouth. The prisoner can have 'no benefit of the doubt,' for no doubt exists in the mind of the prosecutor. Whether she was guilty or innocent, Madame Lafarge could hardly fail to fall a victim to this atrocious system.

In the evidence for the prosecution it was shown that the illness of Lafarge began with the eating of the cake sent from Glandier. The five cakes which Madame Lafarge sent to her husband never reached their destination. When the box was received at Paris the seals had been broken, and a single cake, 'as large as a plate,' had been substituted for them. It was alleged by the prosecutor that this single cake had been prepared by Madame Lafarge, and placed secretly in the box; but it was never shown that she had any opportunity of making such a cake in the house, or that she even saw the box after it was sealed. It is natural to suppose that, had she put this medicated cake with a malevolent purpose into the box, she would have carefully resealed the packet. Yet, when the box reached Lafarge at Paris, the seals had been broken, the five cakes had disappeared, and a cake containing poison had been mysteriously substituted. Denis, the clerk, made a clandestine visit to Paris (alleging that he was going to Guéret), after the box had been despatched from Glandier, and he was with Lafarge when the parcel arrived. Certain circumstances threw suspicion upon Denis in connection with the crime; but it is sufficient here to state that he had ample opportunity to take out the five cakes and substitute the poisoned cake if so disposed.

During Lafarge's last illness at Glandier, obscure hints were given to his mother that he was being poisoned by arsenic. From the evidence it appeared that these hints originated with Denis, who had said to another clerk in Lafarge's employment that their master would be dead within ten days, and that poisoning by arsenic would be the cause of the death. These innuendoes were always coupled with the name of Madame Lafarge. The question arose—as a similar question occurred in the Maybrick case—had Madame Lafarge arsenic at her command? Of

this there was not the slightest doubt. It was proved that she had procured arsenic from a druggist in December, writing openly for it, and stating that she required it for the purpose of destroying rats. On January 5, after her husband's return, she obtained more arsenic for a similar reason from the same druggist, by means of a prescription written by the family physician. Denis stated that, on January 8, she called him into her apartment and asked him to procure more arsenic, along with other purchases which he had to make at Lubersac. He did not purchase the arsenic that day, but on the following day he bought a small quantity, which he did not give to her. Two days afterwards she sent a note to him, asking him to obtain arsenic along with other things, and this again he got, but did not deliver to her. It was evident, therefore, that there was arsenic in the house, partly in the hands of Denis, and partly in those of Madame Lafarge. The suggestion of arsenical poisoning was first made to Lafarge's mother by Denis, and she told her son of these suspicions, so that every movement of the wife was closely watched.

The patient asked one evening for some chicken broth, which was prepared by his sister, and left on the mantel-shelf. Mlle. Le Brun stated, in evidence, that while she and Madame Lafarge were in bed, she saw the latter reach out her hand toward the bowl, and put a white powder into it, stirring the fluid with her finger. On being questioned, Madame Lafarge stated that it was orange-flowers she had put into the bowl, but it was afterwards shown that a sediment found in the bowl contained arsenic. Later in the same day Le Brun saw her taking a glass of water, coloured with wine, and going towards a commode. She seemed to take something out of a drawer in the commode, and to stir the mixture with a spoon. On examining the drawer afterwards, Le Brun saw a little pot containing a white powder, some of which had been spilled in the drawer. She tasted the powder, and it produced a prickling sensation in her throat for nearly an hour. Subsequently she noticed a white deposit in the bottom of the glass that had been used. The powder found in the drawer was declared by a chemist to contain arsenic. Madame Lafarge was in the habit of using powdered gum, which she carried in a small agate box in the pocket of her apron, melting it to make a refreshing drink as she required it, and sometimes giving it to her husband. Some time after her apprehension, this box was discovered; and though it was alleged that arsenic

had been found in the powder by analysis, this was not proved at the trial. There was ample proof, however, that there was arsenic in the house at Glandier in large quantities ; and if Lafarge died by means of the poison, the crime was probably committed by either Denis or Madame Lafarge. The mysterious cake had not done its expected work, and the poisoner was accomplishing his purpose by a free administration of arsenic in the patient's food.

Did Lafarge die of arsenical poisoning? A *post-mortem* examination of the body was ordered immediately after his death, and on January 16 the viscera were removed, placed in unsealed vases, and sent to the chemists at Brive. No precaution was taken to prevent those organs being tampered with. Indeed, it was stated by the officer who conveyed them from Glandier that the stomach was merely wrapped in a cloth, without any seal, and carried openly to its destination. No seals were put upon the vases until they were brought back to Glandier. Meanwhile, the body lay exposed in the house for several days, and it was within the power of anyone to tamper with it. The chemists of Brive declared that they found arsenic in the stomach, and also in a flannel cloth which Madame Lafarge had intended to apply to the throat of the deceased. On a second analysis, the chemists of Limoges declared as positively that the most minute tests, including Marsh's process, failed to disclose the slightest trace of arsenic. While the trial was in progress, nine months after the death of Lafarge, the Court ordered his body to be exhumed, and it was then examined by Orfila, the celebrated physiologist and professor of medical jurisprudence, and he declared that he found arsenic in the stomach and its contents, but not in the tissues. This remarkable statement almost proves that arsenic had been applied to the viscera and the interior of the body after death ; for it is incredible to suppose that the patient could have been continuously under arsenical poisoning for over three weeks without the poison being absorbed into the system. The whole method of chemical examination adopted favours the idea that someone had sprinkled arsenic over the stomach, on the cloth that contained it, and in the cavity of the abdomen, after the death of Lafarge. The first tests at Brive gave arsenic as a result, because the mineral was on the surface. The second tests at Limoges gave no indications of arsenic. Orfila's examination afforded evidence of arsenic in the stomach, but not in the tissues, and this suggests very plainly that death by arsenical poisoning had not been clearly proved.

After a trial which extended over sixteen days, the jury brought

in a verdict against Madame Lafarge, finding her 'guilty, with extenuating circumstances,' and she was sentenced to imprisonment for life with hard labour, and exposure in the pillory. An appeal against the sentence was lodged on the ground of irregularity of procedure, but was rejected on December 18, and the sentence was finally affirmed on August 30, 1841, almost a year after the case had been initiated. She endured imprisonment for twelve years, but her health gave way, and, in consideration of her debility, she was liberated in 1852, and only survived a few months. For a considerable time after the trial a fierce controversy raged among medical and chemical experts in France regarding the tests applied. The chemists at Brive had found arsenic by simple analysis; but M. Dupuytren, of Limoges, one of the most renowned chemists of the time, failed to find any trace of arsenic by the most delicate tests. When it was proposed to exhume the body, M. Orfila was selected to make the examination, though he had already published his conviction that Lafarge had died from arsenical poisoning. M. Raspail, an equally famous physiologist and chemist, afterwards renowned as one of the leaders in the Revolution of 1848, denounced the method which Orfila had adopted, and declared that he had himself been excluded from the investigation because the Court had predetermined to convict the accused. Throughout the whole of the proceedings there was an animus displayed against Madame Lafarge, which almost suggests the existence of a settled purpose to effect her ruin.

Supposing that Lafarge died from arsenical poisoning, though that was very imperfectly proved, is there anyone concerned in the case, other than Madame Lafarge, who would or could have perpetrated the crime? In the 'Edinburgh Review' for 1842 a very elaborate examination of the case from the legal point of view was published, and the writer plainly accused Denis, the clerk, as being the murderer. Certainly the presumption against Denis is quite as strong as that against Madame Lafarge. This man lived by forgery, and was the accomplice of Lafarge in some very shady transactions, by which that unhappy man sought to cover his insolvency. Denis had conceived a violent hatred against Madame Lafarge, as her presence was likely to hinder his nefarious practices, and especially to weaken his hold over his companion in crime. As already related, he went surreptitiously to Paris at the time when the cakes were sent to Lafarge, and it is possible that he placed the poisoned cake in the box. Denis certainly met Lafarge at that time. The ironmaster had suc-

ceeded in borrowing 25,000 francs from his wife's relatives, but when he reached Glandier in his last illness he had only 3,900 francs, and no trace of the rest of this money was ever found. Then Denis, by his own account, was in possession of a large quantity of arsenic. The whole house was open to him, and nothing could be easier than for him to secrete the poison where it would reach the victim, or in compromising places, such as the drawer of the commode, or even the box of powdered gum which Madame Lafarge carried, but which was out of her possession for some time before its contents were analysed. He could have dropped the poison into the empty bowl of chicken broth, into the empty wine-glass, into the drawer where Mlle. Le Brun found it, even into the stomach and the body of the dead man, so as to make sure that arsenic would be declared the cause of death. On the one hand, you have the theory that Marie Cappelle, having developed a violent hatred of her husband, and filled with indignation at finding out the falsehood regarding his position and fortune, had conceived the plan of murdering him. To accomplish this design you must believe that she simulated an affection she did not feel; she persuaded him to make a will in her favour that would secure a competence for her; and then she deliberately set about to poison him by administering arsenic so profusely that the mere sediment in one of the dishes was enough to have killed ten persons. On the other hand, there is Denis, a reprobate, expecting that some day his master and accomplice would cast him off. He knew that Lafarge had gone to Paris to obtain a large sum of money, and he suddenly presents himself there, bearing a poisoned cake; secures over 20,000 francs, returns to Glandier, and busily circulates rumours that Lafarge was being poisoned by arsenic; takes means to have suspicion directed against Madame Lafarge, whom he hated, and even tampers with the body of his victim so that death by poison may be placed beyond dispute. If this theory be true, it was a fiendish plot, and yet it succeeded so far as Denis was concerned. Lafarge died; his wife was accused of murder and condemned; the robbery of the 20,000 francs was never laid to the charge of Denis, and he succeeded in accomplishing the double event of ridding himself of his accomplice and gratifying his desire for revenge upon Madame Lafarge. If Denis committed this foul crime, he escaped without any other punishment save that which would be inflicted by an outraged conscience. The Lafarge tragedy remains a mystery still.

A. H. MILLAR.

PAGES FROM A PRIVATE DIARY.

November 5.—The memory of Guy Faux seems likely to outlive that of many saints in the calendar, whether Catholic or Positivist—a consideration which should supply a hint to the conservators of the old religion or the inventors of new ones. Let them celebrate their heroes with a bonfire! Bonfire, say the philologists, is bone-fire. What could be more appropriate to the feasts of martyrs? Such fires, moreover, would be very useful for burning up refuse, which in our villages has a way of festering in heaps and breeding disease. It would seem that such fires were the custom on at least one festival in old England: 'In vigilia beati Johannis colligunt pueri in quibusdam regionibus ossa et quædam alia immunda, et insimul cremant' (Brand's 'Antiquities,' i. 298). The 'Guy' in our village varies from year to year. When the Liberal party is in office it is apt to be the Premier, or some other prominent Minister; this year it was a local personage. The pyre burnt splendidly, and had the usual maddening effect on the spectators. The bigger boys leaped through the flames like the old Moloch worshippers, and once two of them, jumping from opposite sides, met in the middle and nearly made a bone-fire of it in grim earnest. The younger imps had furnished themselves with besom stumps dipped in tar, which they flourished like male Mænads. Indeed, one could almost have imagined oneself in a college quadrangle at Oxford.

I had a queer dream last night. We were yachting, and put in at a strange Dutch port. We were boarded by polite officials who gave us to understand we were prisoners unless we could pass a satisfactory examination. I was hopelessly plucked. The paper might have been set in Laputa. The first question was: 'From what size of pearl is the largest electric spark extracted?' The second, 'Who was Dr. Pilleau?' I forget the rest.

6th.—A magnificent day for colour. Walking eastwards about four o'clock I met a regiment of some thousand lapwings at drill. Their evolutions were very skilful, from line to column, and from column to line. The level rays of the sun, as the birds circled overhead, struck on their cuirasses and made them shine like gold.

I have had more than one letter asking particulars of the 'secluded' house I mentioned as being vacant in my entry for September 7. It has been taken by my sister.

When the elements were mixed in me, the ingredients were omitted that go to make a partisan. I feel my deficiency whenever G. pays me a visit, for his friends are always in the right, his foes always in the wrong, any deed being but a colourless abstraction apart from the doer. Words follow much the same law, especially if they are humorous. We had the vicar and a few of our more literate neighbours to meet him. At dinner I defended some paradox, no matter what, and was rather severely handled; but G. afterwards congratulated me on the admirable manner in which, as host, I left the advantage to my guests. The compliment was quite undeserved, but I liked it all the same. I met a lady at luncheon to-day who finds it as hard as I do to commit herself to party, though for a different reason. Her brother is an ardent Radical, her husband an ardent Tory. She could be happy with either, were the other dear charmer away, but both are so enthusiastic in their politics that the poor lady's sympathies are rent in sunder. Feeling sure, nevertheless, that the truth must lie somewhere, she reads patiently whatever Sir William Harcourt says upon Mr. Chamberlain, and whatever Mr. Chamberlain says upon Sir William Harcourt, and follows this up by what both the 'Standard' and the 'Daily Chronicle' have to say upon each by way of comment, and hopes thus in time to come to a conclusion.

There seems to be a movement afoot just now for preserving wild creatures of all sorts by making paradises for them, but I hear of no paradise for insects. And yet they too tend to extinction. The ivy round our old houses does, of course, a great deal towards preserving certain species, such as wasps and spiders, but these are still plentiful. The hornet, however, is growing quite scarce in Berkshire. When I was a child they were common enough. I remember my father's old gardener suffering severely from a sting. He brushed a bevy away from a jargonelle pear tree with his hat, but unhappily one stayed inside for purposes of revenge, and as old Northway's head was bald, the creature had a walk over. The hornet also used to figure in a moral poem I was taught when a youngster, as quite the natural playmate of childhood. It ran something like this:

O mother, I told him the hornet would sting him,
If he would persist to go near him and tease him.

Perhaps it comes in a poem by the Misses Taylor. I have searched for it in vain in Mr. Lucas's 'Book of Verses for Children,' a charming collection, in which I am glad to see a return to the old-fashioned strait-laced children's poems. Parents had grown too shy of Struwpeter, and the prompt and awful fate of the wicked in the 'Cautionary Stories' of Elizabeth Turner, forgetting that children can purge their passions by these, as their elders by 'Hamlet' or 'Macbeth.' Here, for instance, is a couple of stanzas on 'Repentance,' not in Mr. Lucas, which do more for a baby's morals than calling upon him to hear sermons:

'Tis not enough to say
 'I'm sorry and repent,'
 And then go on from day to day
 Just as you always went.

Repentance is to leave
 The sins you did before,
 And show that you in earnest grieve
 By doing them no more.

How clean and incisive it is—'Just as you always went'!

10th.—I have been giving my household lately an address now and again upon patriotism, taking occasion by any stimulating report from India. This morning I learn that the garden-boy has walked into Reading to enlist. Of course, I am willing to spare his services to the country, but I should have preferred his giving me warning in the ordinary way, so that I might look out for a substitute. But that, I know, would have been contrary to local etiquette, which directs that when a boy takes his hand from the plough, he should go off to the depôt without looking back. No doubt, if young men spoke of their intention beforehand, fathers and mothers would in most cases exert pressure to keep them at home. This secret enlisting presents a curious parallel to the usual mode of joining the Church of Rome—a resemblance of which I can imagine the late Cardinal Newman making very effective use.

It is gratifying to hear that the Government seems inclined at last to deal fairly with the private soldier in the matter of his pay and rations. The great heart of the people has no conscience, and as long as it can get soldiers or anything else without paying a decent price, it will keep its hands in its pockets. But that day, as far as redcoats are concerned, seems to have gone by. I wish the Archbishop of Canterbury would put England under an inter-

dict until the *black* dragoons had enough to live upon; at any rate, until Government took the rates off what is left of their professional incomes. If the Archbishop does not see his way, perhaps the Pope could be induced to do so, or Mr. Stead. Failing these, the clergy might do worse than submit their case to Sir William Harcourt. He is badly off for a grievance, and here is a grievous one enough. I fear my knowledge of county members does not make me very hopeful of their attempting anything. It is the privilege of us laymen to think parsons too well off.

I have been reading lately the poems of that forgotten worthy and patriot, Edmund Waller, whose name is known to young ladies as the author of 'Go, lovely rose.' His patriotism was of that finer sort which is above party. He was the cousin of Hampden and related to Cromwell, and was employed by Parliament to negotiate with Charles; the negotiation became known as 'Waller's plot to seize London for the King,' for which adventure he was fined 10,000*l.* and banished. His panegyric on Cromwell is a fine piece of writing, finer than his welcome to Charles II., as that monarch did not fail to point out to him. He comes to mind now as the writer of some spirited verses to the King on the English Navy:

We are most happy who can fear no force
But wingèd troops or Pegasean horse.
'Tis not so hard for greedy foes to spoil
Another nation as to touch our soil.
Should Nature's self invade the world again
And o'er the centre spread the liquid main,
Thy power were safe, and her destructive hand
Would but enlarge the bounds of thy command;
Thy dreadful fleet would style thee lord of all
And ride in triumph o'er the drowned ball.

Dr. Johnson called these lines 'so noble, that it were almost criminal to remark the mistake of "centre" for "surface," or to say that the empire of the sea would be worth little if it were not that the waters terminate in land.' Of course, by 'centre' Waller means the earth as centre of the universe. How rich England is in patriotic poetry, and what an admirable addition to it is Mr. Newbolt's 'Admirals All'!

I came on a curious passage in a letter of Mrs. Waller's to her banished son about the marriage of his daughter. She wishes to know what dowry he is prepared to give. 'I am not in hast to mary hir, she is yong enough to stay, but the danger is if she should catch the small poxe or hir beauty should change, it would

be a great lose to hir.' Everybody is familiar with the frequent references to smallpox in the letters and memoirs of the seventeenth century. Pepys is full of it; but I have never met a passage that brings so keenly home to one the nearness of the risk.

11th.—I went up to town to see my tailor, and called in at my hatter's to have a mourning band removed. The shopman remonstrated: 'Hatbands are fashionable just now, sir.' 'Oh,' I said, 'you refer to Court mourning.' 'Oh, dear no, sir; hatbands have been fashionable all this season.' So it seems young gentlemen still, as in Shakespeare's time, can be sad as night only for wantonness!

My sister Charlotte was in distress at having to change her butler, and she fancied the new man had already begun to take liberties. 'So,' said she, 'I gave him a lesson last night. He did not offer me cheese at dinner; so I said, "John, where is the cheese?" "I thought you did not take cheese, ma'am." "Bring it." And when he brought it, I said, "No, thank you." I don't think he will forget.' Charlotte told me she was glad to observe that more attention was being paid to heraldry. 'I hate to see widows prancing about with their husbands' crests on their harness.'

I searched for a wedding present for K. I saw a lovely Sheffield-plated urn, which I would have bought if I were not certain she would confuse it with electro-plate. If I were only a little older I could be eccentric, like the lady who, according to the papers, gave a brooch with 'Granny' in diamonds. There would be some fun in that; the expectant grandchild would be in such a delicious quandary. *Odi et amo*. My own dear grandmother was almost too eccentric at the time of our marriage; she had promised us our house linen, and talked so much about it beforehand that she came to think she had given it, and would not be undeceived.

12th.—I walked with the vicar, who told me some anecdotes of an ordination examination. The best was this: The question was, 'State what you know of Christianity in Britain before Augustine?' and the answer, 'Before the coming of Julius Cæsar, B.C. 55, there was practically no Christianity in Britain.' The 'practically' is good. On our walk we met the stationmaster of a neighbouring village, who gave me a military salute with his right hand and raised his left three inches to the vicar. 'Why does he treat you to such maimed rites?' I asked. 'It puzzles me,' said the vicar, 'as it is neither Saturday nor Monday. On these days he is full of the sermon he has delivered or is to deliver

at Bethel, and smiles on me as a fellow-augur. But on other days he gives me his full courtesy as one of his masters, the general public.' At the station we heard that the good man had resigned his position on the railway to devote himself to the cure of souls.

We talked of the 'Golden Treasury.' I thought Mr. Palgrave's 'Lectures on Landscape in Poetry' a much better book; but it did not hit an especially happy moment, like the 'Golden Treasury,' and would never be popular, as the public does not care for criticism. The changes in the various editions of the 'Treasury' are an interesting study. It was originally issued in 1861. Sidney was not recognised until 1883, nor was Cowper's 'Castaway,' his finest poem. In 1891 appeared for the first time Coleridge's 'Kubla Khan,' Vaughan's 'They are all gone into the world of light,' Marvell's 'Picture of little T. C.,' and 'Nymph and Fawn,' and ten poems of Campion, besides Habington, Lord Essex, Greene, Lord Rochester, Norris of Bemerton, and Lyte, all hitherto unrepresented, and all unnecessary. The defect of the book as a selection is that beginning with an aversion to anything eccentric, which justifiably excluded Donne, it lapsed too often into a tolerance of the commonplace. There is an extravagant over-proportion of matter from Wordsworth (who has forty-three poems), Campbell, Scott, Moore, and the minor Scotch poets. To point the moral more clearly, additions to the long tale of Wordsworth were made room for by excisions from Shelley. 'A Widow Bird' and 'Life of Life' disappeared in 1891. The representation of several poets—notably Blake, Keats, Campion, Carew—is really misrepresentation. But when all deductions are made, the book must be reckoned to have thoroughly deserved its success.

15th.—Curiosity is a well-marked trait in most of the higher mammals. The new trees I have planted this season, some red oaks and a maple (Schwedleri), have been objects of careful investigation to the cows and horses, and our new bowling-green is exciting just as much interest among our own species. Some of the neighbours make a circuit, as they can, to the front door, by way of the garden, in order to inspect it; some indeed, having inspected, forget to proceed to the front door. In the village it is spoken of as —'s new pond. I have a tenderness for curiosity, holding with Coleridge that it is at the root of all philosophy and all science. I remark, however, that the persons most curious about my affairs are the most reticent about their own. I suppose

this is only a particular example of the general law that a habit of getting rarely coexists with a habit of spending.

Three weeks of fine weather have finished the excavation; the turf has been rolled down the sides; and we are now waiting for the brick paths to be made before putting in the bulbs. And we shall probably have to wait till spring. For the big house that is building at — for the gentleman from town, in addition to spoiling all our roads by the daily passage of traction engines, has engrossed all the local bricklayers. This is excellent sport for them, but hard on the casual employer. As a rule, in our part of the country such contracts are liberally construed, and we borrow workmen from each other for an hour or a day; but the gentleman from town has no knowledge of our primitive ways, and sticks to his pound of flesh. Nor would I blame him, for sometimes a bricklayer will have half-a-dozen jobs going at once. He will half unroof the church, and then go and half buttress the meeting-house; from this he will be called off to make a pit at the Manor or new steyne a well at the vicarage. While he is busy there Tom's bailiff, who is 'the Master,' will fetch him off to lath and plaster a cottage wall; and when that is done he will work gently round the other jobs, with an occasional new one interspersed. Perhaps I may be able to get my friend X., who is an amateur bricklayer, to put in a day with the trowel when he is tired of the gun.

Eugenia, who suddenly perverted from Mrs. Earle to Mr. Inigo Thomas, has been insisting of late that we must have peacocks on the terrace, like those in his drawing of Risley Hall.¹ I do not like peafowl as gardeners, nor does William; but I must allow that those Eugenia has begged from her grandmother have given us little trouble so far. Not that they have remained on the terrace in the graceful attitudes illustrated in Mr. Thomas's picture, but that they have taken themselves off altogether to Tom's farm, where they adorn the great central midden. Once a day William fetches them home, one under each arm, and at once they begin a stately march back again. I think after this I shall believe, what people often tell me, that no quality is so mistakenly imputed as pride.

The fall of the leaf has revealed on many trees the encroachments of ivy, and I have been walking round the place with a knife. It is curious that, notwithstanding all the home truths that foresters and poets tell of the ivy, it should be still allowed

¹ See *The Formal Garden in England*. By Blomfield and Thomas

in so many parks to hurt and disfigure the elms. Tom unkindly says that when on an estate you see ivy having its own way, it is at once a sign and a symbol that the lady rules the Manor.

16th.—Sophia overheard the following dialogue at a registry office:

Lady. Are you Church of England?

Maid. No, ma'am.

Lady. Roman Catholic?

Maid. No, ma'am.

Lady. Wesleyan, perhaps?

Maid. No, ma'am.

Lady. May I ask, then, what you are?

Maid. Please, ma'am, I belong to the church at Caversham.

This individualising tendency is an English instinct, and accounts not only for the existence of the Church of England, but also for the two hundred and odd sects tabulated in Whitaker. The last time Disestablishment was in the air, I was told by an old fellow that he would like the church disestablished at P——, but not at S——.

18th.—'Conventions are the rudimentary organs of duties. The duty of brotherly love dwindles into the convention of leaving one's visiting-card at a neighbour's house, just as the old-fashioned duty of burning one's enemy dwindled into burning his name on a piece of paper. In particular, the duty of "visiting the sick" survives in the convention of "calling to inquire," and, if the sick are persons of importance, writing your name in a book for the press to copy.' These sombre reflections, which I have written in my 'Pilgrim's Scrip,' were suggested by a visit I have just paid to my sister, who is recovering from a slight illness. I found at the house a rather young and very smart lady, engaged in making apologies for her mother, who was a near neighbour, and 'had been so much occupied all the week with her housekeeping, and to-day was so busy arranging her flowers, that she had really found no time to call.' I was greatly tickled. It was plain the maternal conscience was so far instructed as to have heard of the duty of visiting the sick, but not so far as to understand that if a thing was a duty at all, time must be found for it. As to any useful object that a visit might serve, it was out of her horizon. The duty, in short, was merely a convention. In the course of conversation with the elegant daughter I assured her that not visiting the sick, so far from needing any apology, was the only

rational course to pursue. The phrase 'to visit,' I explained, does not mean 'to make a call,' but 'to take care of;' and I pointed out how opposed it is to the principles of medical science to go into the same room with a person suffering from any infectious disease, such as a cold. 'In our village,' I said, 'we reconcile religion and science by leaving little vessels of *tisane* at each other's doors, and hurrying away as fast as possible.' As a matter of fact I am myself a little old-fashioned, both in my science and my religion, and I continue to pay visits even to people who have colds; only I make a point of not doing it as a duty; because, so far as I can see, the only object of such a visit is to cheer the spirits of your patient, which it fails to do so soon as it is perceived you are calling from conscientious motives. I find that the best way to raise a person's cheerfulness, if the ailment be only slight, is to take a gloomy view of it. People hate to have it assumed that they are better, or even to be asked if they are better; they hate to have you set out before them all the redeeming features of their situation; as, for example, if they have broken a tendon in a bicycling accident, to say how easily it might have been a bone; or if on the top of this they have taken influenza, to congratulate them on the rest in bed, which is just what the leg required. The true comforter parallels your fate with the woe upon woe of the ancient tragedies. To play the superior person with an invalid is really to steal from him the moral advantage of his situation. He knows what bright side there may be to the case better than you do, but he is feeling the dark side, and what he asks is a little sympathy;¹ and when, having enjoyed that, it is time to waive it away and erect himself above the calamity, why, the moral advantage lies with him, as it should.

20th.—I was looking this morning at the fine colour everywhere, bright in the foreground, and fading into a fairy-like distance; and I was groping round my mind for some fit expression of that fairy world, when there leapt to memory the familiar line:

'Tis distance lends enchantment to the view.

I believe this is the first time I have realised what the poet meant by 'enchantment.' At this rate, before I die I may be able to appreciate 'To be or not to be.' I have been reading 'Hamlet' lately, and trying to recover the sharpness of first impres-

¹ I think of getting the Liglid of Ule to extend to Berkshire his order of 'Friends of the Flamp.' For particulars, see the 'Dumpy Book,' by Mr. E. V. Lucas.

sions. How strange and unlike anything else in literature is the '*Ghost beneath, Swear!*' Shakespeare must have enjoyed it as a new thrill; and Hamlet's queer speeches and hysteria in that scene must have been more puzzling to his audience then than now. They must have been set down purely for the self-indulgence of Shakespeare himself—indeed, like half Hamlet says. One of the best things said yet about 'Hamlet' is to be found in a back number of the '*Pall Mall Gazette*,' by 'An Old Playgoer,' who was Matthew Arnold. 'Shakespeare created "*Hamlet*" with his mind running on Montaigne, and placed its action and its hero in Montaigne's atmosphere and world. What is that world? It is the world of man viewed as a being *ondoyant et divers*, balancing and indeterminate, the plaything of cross-motives and shifting impulses, swayed by a thousand subtle influences, physiological and pathological. Certainly the action and the hero of the original "*Hamlet*" story are not such as to compel the poet to place them in this world and no other; but they admit of being placed there; Shakespeare resolved to place them there, and they lent themselves to his resolve. The resolve once taken to place the action in the world of problem, the problem became brightened by all the force of Shakespeare's faculties, of Shakespeare's subtlety. "*Hamlet*" thus comes at last to be not a drama followed with perfect comprehension and profoundest emotion, which is the ideal for tragedy, but a problem soliciting interpretation and solution' (October 23, 1884).

Let me jot down here a question proposed to be set in a college examination: 'From the characters of Polonius, Laertes, and Ophelia, deduce that of Mrs. Polonius.'

24th.—Middle-aged men like myself are often haunted by the notion that in some factitious way they can raise the value of the libraries they leave behind them. The most childlike method I ever heard of was that of my neighbour at —, who wrote across the title-page of every volume, 'This is a scarce and valuable work.' But his device did not take in the local tradesmen who assisted at the auction. If a man is a poet or painter, and is sure of dying before his boom is over, let him write his name in every book. Else 'the efiest way' is to buy a book-plate of Mr. Sherborn. Annotation tends to depreciation; I know it well; but no bad habit so grows upon a man. To-day I made two entries in my copy of Bacon's '*Essays*' to No. xlix., *Of Suitors*. On the words 'Timing of suits is the principal,' I say: 'If you know a great person to have something against you,

of which in consideration of your services he is loth to speak, make your request then, as he will probably grant it as a cover to his complaint.' On the rule *iniquum petas ut æquum feras*, which might be rendered, 'Ask more than your due to get your own,' I note that an Oxford scholar of my acquaintance, if he wished a valuable book to be taken from the Bodleian Library into the Radcliffe Reading-room that he might continue reading it after the library was closed, used to begin by asking leave for some unique manuscript, and when that was refused, a book somewhat less valuable, coming gradually down a scale and being refused with less emphasis, until he reached the book which alone he wanted, when he would say, 'At least you can have no objection to my taking this.'

In Lamb's essay which he entitles 'Detached Thoughts on Books,' he makes several strictures as to the form, folio or octavo, in which certain works should be read. On this I comment: 'I knew a clergyman once ('tis true he was also a baronet), who used to read his Thomas à Kempis in a Bodoni folio, and a vellum paper copy at that; a truly magnificent way of despising the world.' One notices that Lamb cares nothing for first editions as such; he even pooh-poohs the first folio of Shakespeare, a copy of which my fingers still tingle from handling. What would he have thought of a young lad whom I heard ask at a bookseller's for 'Three Men in a Boat' (or some such title), adding, 'I should prefer it in a first edition!' What would he have said, too, of the folk who put handsome volumes into handsome book-cases, and leave them there for a quarter of a century without removing the auction tickets!'

26th.—The School Board Election in London spreads a wave of influence even into remote Arcady. For one thing it affects the tone of the small local boards; for another, it affects the tone of the teachers' trades union journal, and through that the cock of our own schoolmasters' nose, which is 'one of the finest things we have.' I am sorry to see that the press augurs ill for the success of the Moderates from the absurd split in the party. As I was reading just now the weighty words of the 'Standard,' little Pippa passed singing:

Lavender's blue,
Diggle, Diggle.
Lavender's green,
When you are king,
Diggle, Diggle.
I shall be queen.

Call out your men,
Diggle, Diggle.
 Set them to work;
 Some save the rates,
Diggle, Diggle.
 Some save the Church.

It is all very well in a song, but when true blue wavers between blue and green, a crude red is only too likely to get the better of it. Whichever party comes to the top I hope will respect the great education law formulated by Guizot: 'Le vœu des parents sera consulté et suivi en tout ce qui concerne l'éducation religieuse de leurs enfants.'

I heard the other day a story from the Education Office. An inspector was asked why he had charged so much for his fare between two places when as the crow flies it was only so many miles. He replied, 'I do not ride a crow.'

29th.—The sale at Sotheby's of some letters written by Sir Philip Francis has revived an ancient controversy. I once knew an old gentleman living at Windsor, who thought he had discovered a satisfactory proof of the Franciscan authorship of the 'Letters of Junius.' He would take his victim with great solicitude, as if he loved him, into St. George's Chapel and point to a tablet erected to the memory of the Anglo-Saxon scholar Francis Junius; and then would proceed to a demonstration how on certain days Francis *must* have been in the chapel, and *must* have seen the tablet, and so doubtless adopted the name. 'But why,' I once protested, 'need he have gone so far in search of his pseudonym as Windsor? Why could he not have borrowed it from the address on his own letters—Philip Francis, *Junior*, Esq.? He could always have alleged, if the point were brought home to him, that the name must refer to Junius Brutus.'

30th.—My friend S. writes from Cambridge, 'In your journal in the CORNHILL for December you refer to some criticism on your use of "ancestor" and appeal to the Prince of Wales and Queen Elizabeth. I think both you and the Prince of Wales are right. "Ancestor," surely is *antecessor*, and has nothing to do with blood relation. That is only a modern usage; and even now when we talk of our "ancestors" we mean all members of previous generations. Macaulay to the Queen who spoke of James II. as "my ancestor"—"your predecessor, your Majesty"—let his anti-Jacobite feelings get the better of his scholarship.'

THE CASTLE INN.¹

BY STANLEY WEYMAN.

CHAPTER I.

A KNIGHT-ERRANT.

ABOUT a hundred and thirty years ago, when the third George, whom our grandfathers knew in his blind dotage, was a young and sturdy bridegroom; when old Q., whom 1810 found peering from his balcony in Piccadilly, deaf, toothless, and a skeleton, was that gay and lively spark, the Earl of March; when *bore* and *boreish* were words of *haut ton*, unknown to the vulgar, and the price of a borough was 5,000*l.*; when gibbets still served for sign-posts, and railways were not and highwaymen were—to be more exact, in the early spring of the year 1767, a travelling chariot-and-four drew up about five in the evening before the inn at Wheatley Bridge, a short stage from Oxford on the Oxford road. A gig and a couple of post-chaises, attended by the customary group of stablemen, toppers, and gossips already stood before the house, but these were quickly deserted in favour of the more important equipage. The drawers in their aprons trooped out, but the landlord, foreseeing a rich harvest, was first at the door, and opened it with a bow such as is rarely seen in these days.

‘Will your lordship please to alight?’ he said.

‘No, rascal!’ cried one of those within. ‘Shut the door!’

‘You wish fresh horses, my lord? Of course. They shall be——’

‘We wish nothing,’ was the brisk answer. ‘D’ye hear? Shut the door, and go to the devil!’

Puzzled, but obedient, the landlord fell back on the servants, who had descended from their seat in front and were beating their breasts with their hands, for the March evening was chill. ‘What is up, gentlemen?’ he said.

‘Nothing. But we will put something down, by your leave,’ they answered.

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'Won't they do the same?' And he cocked his thumb in the direction of the carriage.

'No. You have such an infernal bad road, the dice roll,' was the answer. 'They will finish their game in quiet. That is all. Lord, how your folks stare! Have they never seen a lord before?'

'Who is it?' the landlord asked eagerly. 'I thought I knew his Grace's face.'

Before the servant could answer or satisfy his inquisitiveness, the door of the carriage was opened in haste, and the landlord sprang to offer his shoulder. A tall young man whose shaped riding-coat failed to hide that which his jewelled hands and small French hat would alone have betrayed—that he was dressed in the height of fashion—stepped down. 'A room and a bottle of your best claret,' he said. 'And bring me ink and a pen.'

'Immediately, my lord. This way, my lord. Your lordship will perhaps honour me by dining here?'

'Lord, no! Do you think I want to be poisoned?' was the frank answer. And looking about him with languid curiosity, the young peer, followed by a companion, lounged into the house.

The third traveller—for three there were—directed the servant by a gesture to close the carriage door, and, keeping his seat, gazed sleepily through the window. The loitering crowd, standing at a respectful distance, returned his glances with interest, until an empty post-chaise, approaching from the direction of Oxford, rattled up and split the group asunder. As the steaming horses stopped within a few paces of the chariot, the gentleman seated in the latter saw one of the ostlers go up to the post-chaise and heard him say, 'Soon back, Jimmie?'

'Ay, and I ha' been stopped too,' the postboy answered as he dropped his reins.

'No!' in a tone of surprise. 'Was it Black Jack?'

'Not he. 'Twas a woman!'

A murmur of astonishment greeted the answer. The postboy grinned, and sitting easily in his pad prepared to enjoy the situation. 'Ay, a woman!' he said. 'And a rare pair of eyes to that. What do you think she wanted, lads?'

'The stuff, of course.'

'Not she. Wanted one of them I took'—and he jerked his

elbow contemptuously in the direction whence he had come—'to fight a duel for her. One of they! Said, was he Mr. Berkeley, and would he risk his life for a woman.'

The head ostler stared. 'Lord! and who was it he was to fight?' he asked at last.

'She did not say. Her spark maybe, that has jilted her.'

'And would they, Jimmie?'

'They? Shoo! They were Methodists,' the postboy answered contemptuously. 'Scratch wigs and snuff-colour. If she had not been next door to a Bess of Bedlam and in a main tantrum, she would have seen that. But "Are you Mr. Berkeley?" she says, all on fire like. And "Will you fight for a woman?" And when they shrieked out, banged the door on them. But I tell you she was a pretty piece as you'd wish to see. If she had asked me, I would not have said no to her.' And he grinned.

The gentleman in the chariot opened a window. 'Where did she stop you, my man?' he asked idly.

'Half a mile this side of Oxford, your worship,' the postboy answered, knuckling his forehead. 'Seemed to me, sir, she was a play-actress. She had that sort of way with her.'

The gentleman nodded and closed the window. The night had so far set in that they had brought out lights; as he sat back, one of these, hung in the carriage, shone on his features and betrayed that he was smiling. In this mood his face lost the air of affected refinement—which was then the mode, and went perfectly with a wig and ruffles—and appeared in its true mould, plain and strong yet not uncomely. His features lacked the insipid regularity which, where all shaved, passed for masculine beauty; the nose ended largely, the cheek-bones were high, and the chin projected. But from the risk and even the edge of ugliness it was saved by a pair of grey eyes, keen, humorous, and kindly, and a smile that showed the eyes at their best. Of late those eyes had been known to express both weariness and satiety; for the man was tiring of the round of costly follies and aimless amusements in which he passed his life. But at twenty-six pepper is still hot in the mouth, and Sir George Soane continued to drink, game, and fribble, though the first pungent flavour of those delights had vanished, and the things themselves began to pall upon him.

When he had sat thus ten minutes, smiling at intervals, a stir about the door announced that his companions were returning.

The landlord preceded them, and was rewarded for his pains with half a guinea; the crowd with a shower of small silver. The postilions cracked their whips, the horses started forward, and amid a shrill hurrah my lord's carriage rolled away from the door.

'Now, who casts?' the peer cried briskly, arranging himself in his seat. 'George, I'll set you. The old stakes?'

'No, I am done for to-night,' Sir George answered, yawning without disguise.

'What! crabbed, dear lad?'

'Ay, set Berkeley, my lord. He's a better match for you.'

'And be robbed by the first highwayman we meet? No, no! I told you, if I was to go down to this damp hole of mine—fancy living a hundred miles from White's! I should die if I could not game every day—you were to play with me, and Berkeley was to ensure my purse.'

'He would as soon take it,' Sir George said languidly, gazing through the glass.

'Sooner by ——!' said the third traveller, a saturnine, dark-faced man of thirty-four or more, who sat with his back to the horses, and toyed with a pistol that lay on the seat beside him. 'I'm content if your lordship is.'

'Then have at you! Call the main, Colonel. You may be the devil among the highwaymen—that was Selwyn's joke, was it not?—but I'll see the colour of your money.'

'Beware of him. He *doved* March,' said Sir George indifferently.

'He won't strip me,' cried the young lord. 'Five is the main. Five to four he throws crabs! Will you take, George?'

Soane did not answer, and the two, absorbed in the rattle of the dice and the turns of their beloved hazard, presently forgot him; his lordship being the deepest player in London and as fit a successor to the luckless Lord Mountford as one drop of water to another. Thus left to himself, and as effectually screened from remark as if he sat alone, Sir George devoted himself to an eager scrutiny of the night, looking first through one window and then through the other; and in this he persevered though darkness had fallen so completely that only the hedges showed in the lamp-light, gliding giddily by in endless walls of white. On a sudden he dropped the glass with an exclamation, and thrust out his head.

'Pull up!' he cried. 'I want to descend.'

The young lord uttered a peevish exclamation. 'What is to do?' he said, glancing round; then, instantly returning to the dice, 'if it is my purse they want, say Berkeley is here. That will scare them. What are you doing, George?'

'Wait a minute,' was the answer; and in a twinkling Soane was out, and was ordering the servant, who had climbed down, to close the door. This done, he strode back along the road to a spot where a figure, cloaked and hooded, was visible, lurking on the fringe of the lamplight. As he approached it, he raised his hat with an exaggeration of politeness.

'Madam,' he said, 'you asked for me, I believe?'

The woman—for a woman it was, though he could see no more of her than a pale face, staring set and Gorgon-like from under the hood—did not answer at once. Then, 'Who are you?' she said.

'Colonel Berkeley,' he answered with assurance, and again saluted her.

'Who killed the highwayman at Hounslow last Christmas?' she cried.

'The same, madam.'

'And shot Farnham Joe at Roehampton?'

'Yes, madam. And much at your service.'

'We shall see,' she answered, her voice savagely dubious. 'At least you are a gentleman and can use a pistol? But are you willing to risk something for justice' sake?'

'And the sake of your *beaux yeux*, madam?' he answered, a laugh in his voice. 'Yes.'

'You mean it?'

'Prove me,' he answered.

His tone was light; but the woman, who seemed to labour under strong emotion, either failed to notice this or was content to put up with it. 'Then send on your carriage,' she said.

His jaw fell at that, and had there been light by which to see him he would have looked foolish. At last, 'Are we to walk?' he said.

'Those are the lights of Oxford,' she answered. 'We shall be there in ten minutes.'

'Oh, very well,' he said. 'A moment, if you please.'

She waited while he went to the carriage and told the astonished servants to leave his baggage at the Mitre; this

arranged, he put in his head and announced to his host that he would come on next day. 'Your lordship must excuse me to-night,' he said.

'What is up?' my lord asked, without raising his eyes or turning his head. He had taken the box and thrown nicks three times running, at five guineas the cast; and was in the seventh heaven. 'Ha! five is the main. Now you are on it, Colonel. What did you say, George? Not coming! What is it?'

'An adventure.'

'What! a petticoat?'

'Yes,' said Sir George, smirking.

'Well, you find 'em in odd places. Take care of yourself. But shut the door, that is a good fellow. There is a d——d draught.'

Sir George complied, and, nodding to the servants, walked back to the woman. As he reached her the carriage with its lights whirled away, and left them in darkness.

Soane wondered if he was not a fool for his pains, and advanced a step nearer to conviction when the woman with an impatient 'Come!' started along the road; moving at a smart pace in the direction which the chariot had taken, and betraying so little shyness or timidity as to seem unconscious of his company. The neighbourhood of Oxford is low and flat, and except where a few lights marked the outskirts of the city a wall of darkness shut them in, permitting nothing to be seen that lay more than a few paces away. A grey drift of clouds, luminous in comparison with the gloom about them, moved slowly overhead, and out of the night the raving of a farm-dog or the creaking of a dry bough came to the ear with melancholy effect.

The fine gentleman of that day had no taste for the wild, the rugged, or the lonely. He lived too near the times when those words spelled danger. He found at Almack's his most romantic scene, at Ranelagh his *terra incognita*, in the gardens of Versailles his ideal of the charming and picturesque. Sir George was no exception to the rule, and he shivered as he looked round. He began to experience a revulsion of spirits; and to consider that, for a gentleman who owned Lord Chatham for a patron, and was even now on his roundabout way to join that minister—for a gentleman whose fortune, though crippled and impaired, was still tolerable, and who where it had suffered might look with confidence to see it made good at the public expense—or to what end

patrons or ministers?—he began to reflect, I say, that for such an one to exchange a peer's coach and good company for a night trudge at a woman's heels was a folly, better befitting a boy at school than a man of his years. Not that he had ever been so wild as to contemplate anything serious; or had entertained from the first the most remote intention of brawling in an unknown cause. That was an extravagance beyond him; and he doubted if the girl had it really in her mind. The only adventure he had proposed, when he left the carriage, was one of gallantry; it was the only adventure then in vogue. And for that, now the time was come, and the *incognita* and he were as much alone as the most ardent lover could wish, he felt singularly disinclined.

True, the outline of her cloak, and the indications of a slender, well-formed shape which it permitted to escape, satisfied him that the postboy had not deceived him; but that his companion was both young and handsome. And with this and his bargain it was to be supposed he would be content. But the pure matter-of-factness of the girl's manner, her silence, and her uncompromising attitude as she walked by his side cooled whatever ardour her beauty and the reflection that he had jockeyed Berkeley were calculated to arouse; and it was with an effort that he presently lessened the distance between them.

'Et vera incessu patuit dea!' he said, speaking in the tone between jest and earnest which he had used before. "'And all the goddess in her step appears.'" Which means that you have the prettiest walk in the world, my dear—but whither are you taking me?'

She walked steadily on, not deigning an answer.

'But—my charmer, let us parley,' he remonstrated, striving to maintain a light tone. 'In a minute we shall be in the town and——'

'I thought that we understood one another,' she answered curtly, still continuing to walk, and to look straight before her; in which position her hood hid her face. 'I am taking you where I want you.'

'Oh, very well,' he said, shrugging his shoulders. But under his breath he muttered, 'By heaven, I believe that the pretty fool really thinks—that I am going to fight for her!'

To a man who had supped at White's the night before, and knew his age to be the *âge des philosophes*, it seemed the wildest fancy in the world. And his distaste grew. But to break off

and leave her—at any rate until he had put it beyond question that she had no underthought—to break off and leave her after placing himself in a situation so humiliating, was too much for the pride of a Macaroni. The lines of her head and figure too, half guessed and half revealed, and wholly light and graceful, had caught his fancy and created a desire to subjugate her. Reluctantly, therefore, he continued to walk beside her, over Magdalen Bridge, and thence by a path which, skirting the city, ran across the low wooded meadows at the back of Merton.

A little to the right the squat tower of the college loomed against the lighter rack of clouds, and rising amid the dark lines of trees that beautify that part of the outskirts, formed a *coup d'œil* sufficiently impressive. Here and there, in such of the chamber windows as looked over the meadows, lights twinkled cheerfully; emboldened by which, yet avoiding their scope, pairs of lovers of the commoner class sneaked to and fro under the trees. Whether their presence recalled early memories which Sir George's fastidiousness found unpalatable, or he felt his fashion smirched by the vulgarity of this Venus-walk, his impatience grew, and was not far from bursting forth when his guide turned sharply into an alley behind the cathedral, and, threading a lane of mean houses, entered a small court.

The place, though poor and narrow, was not squalid. Sir George could see so much by the light which shone from a window and fell on a group of five or six persons, who stood about a door and talked in low, excited voices. He had a good view of one man's face, and read in it gloom and anger. Then the group made way for the girl, eyeing her, as he thought, with pity and a sort of deference; and cursing the folly that had brought him into such a place and situation, wondering what on earth it all meant or in what it would end, he followed her into the house.

She opened a door on the right-hand side of the narrow passage, and led the way into a long, low room. For a moment he saw no more than two lights on a distant table, and kneeling at a chair beside them a woman with grey dishevelled hair, who seemed to be praying, her face hidden. Then his gaze, sinking instinctively, fell on a low bed between him and the woman; and there rested on a white sheet, and the solemn outlines—so certain in their rigidity, so unmistakable by human eyes—of a body laid out for burial.

CHAPTER II.

A MISADVENTURE.

To be brought up short in an amorous quest by such a sight as that was a shock alike to Soane's better nature and his worse dignity. The former moved him to stand silent and abashed, the latter to ask with an indignant curse why he had been brought to that place. And the latter lower instinct prevailed. But when he raised his head to put the question with the necessary spirit of temper, he found that the girl had left his side and passed to the other hand of the dead; where the hood thrown back from her face, she stood looking at him with such a gloomy fire in her eyes as it needed but a word, a touch, a glance to kindle into a blaze.

At the moment, however, he thought less of this than of the beauty of the face which he saw for the first time. It was a southern face, finely moulded, dark and passionate, full-lipped yet wide of brow, with a generous breadth between the eyes. Seldom had he seen a woman more beautiful, and he stood silent, the words he had been about to speak dying stillborn on his lips.

Yet she seemed to understand them; she answered them. 'Why have I brought you here?' she cried, her voice trembling; and she pointed to the bed. 'Because he is—he was my father. And he lies there. And because the man who killed him goes free. And I would—I would kill *him*! Do you hear me? I would kill him!'

Sir George tried to free his mind from the influence of her passion and her eyes, from the nightmare of the room and the body, and to see things in a sane light. 'But—my good girl,' he said, slowly and not unkindly, 'I know nothing about it. Nothing. I am a stranger here.'

'For that reason I brought you here,' she retorted.

'But—I cannot interfere,' he answered. 'There is the law. You must apply to it. The law will punish the man if he has done wrong.'

'But the law will *not* punish him!' she cried with scorn. 'The law? The law is your law, the law of the rich. And he'—she pointed to the bed—'was poor and a servant. And the man who killed him was his master. So he goes free—of the law!'

'But if he killed him?' Sir George muttered lamely.

'He did!' she cried between her teeth. 'And I would have you kill him!'

He shook his head. 'My good girl,' he said kindly, 'you are distraught. You are not yourself. Or you would know a gentleman does not do these things.'

'A gentleman!' she retorted, her smouldering rage flaming up at last. 'No; but I will tell you what he does. He kills a man to save his purse! Or his honour! Or for a mis-word at cards! Or the lie given in drink! He will run a man through in a dark room, with no one to see fair play! But for drawing his sword to help a woman, or avenge a wrong, a gentleman—a gentleman does not do these things. It is true! And may——'

'Oh, have done, have done, my dear!' cried a wailing, tearful voice; and Sir George, almost cowed by the girl's fierce words and the fiercer execration that was on her lips, hailed the intervention with relief. The woman whom he had seen on her knees had risen and now approached the girl, showing a face wrinkled, worn, and plain, but not ignoble; and for the time lifted above the commonplace by the tears that rained down it. 'Oh, my lovey, have done,' she cried. 'And let the gentleman go. To kill another will not help him that is dead. Nor us that are left alone!'

'It will not help him!' the girl answered, shrilly and wildly; and her eyes, leaving Soane, strayed round the room as if she were that moment awakened and missed some one. 'No! But is he to be murdered, and no one suffer? Is he to die and no one pay? He who had a smile for us, go in or out, and never a harsh word or thought? Who never did any man wrong or wished any man ill? Yet he lies there! Oh, mother, mother,' she continued, her voice broken on a sudden by a tremor of pain, 'we are alone! We are alone! We shall never see him come in at that door again!'

The old woman sobbed helplessly and made no answer; on which the girl, with a gesture as simple as it was beautiful, drew the grey head to her shoulder. Then she looked at Sir George. 'Go,' she said; but he saw that the tears were welling up in her eyes, and that her frame was beginning to tremble. 'Go! I was not myself—a while ago—when I fetched you. Go, sir, and leave us.'

Moved by the abrupt change, as well as by her beauty, Sir George lingered; muttering that perhaps he could help her in another way. But she shook her head, once and again; and, instinctively respecting the grief which had found at last its proper

vent, he turned and, softly lifting the latch, went out into the court.

The night air cooled his brow, and recalled him to sober earnest and the eighteenth century. In the room which he had left, he had marked nothing out of the common except the girl. The mother, the furniture, the very bed on which the dead man lay, all were appropriate, and such as he would expect to find in the house of his under-steward. But the girl? The girl was gloriously handsome; and as eccentric as she was beautiful. Sir George's head turned and his eyes glowed as he thought of her. He considered what a story it would be to tell at White's; and he put up his spying-glass, and looked through it to see if the towers of the cathedral still overhung the court. 'Gad, sir!' he said aloud, rehearsing the story, and as much to get rid of an unfashionable sensation he had in his throat as in pure whimsy. 'I was surprised to find that it was Oxford. It should have been Granada, or Bagdad, or Florence! I give you my word, the houris that the Montagu saw in the Hammam at Stamboul were nothing to her!'

The persons through whom he had passed on his way to the door were still standing before the house. Glancing back when he had reached the mouth of the court, he saw that they were watching him; and, obeying a sudden impulse of curiosity, he turned on his heel and signed to the nearest to come to him. 'Here, my man,' he said; 'a word with you.'

The fellow moved towards him reluctantly, and with suspicion. 'Who is it lies dead there?' Sir George asked.

'Your honour knows,' the man answered cautiously.

'No, I don't.'

'Then you will be the only one in Oxford that does not,' the fellow replied, eyeing him curiously.

'Maybe,' Soane answered with impatience. 'Take it so, and answer the question.'

'It is Masterson, that was the porter at Pembroke.'

'Ah? And how did he die?'

'That is asking,' the man answered, looking shiftily about. 'And it is an ill business, and I want no trouble. Oh, well'—he continued, as Sir George put something in his hand—'thank your honour, I'll drink your health. Yes, it is Masterson, poor man, sure enough; and two days ago he was as well as you or I—saving your presence. He was on the gate that evening, and there was a supper on one of the staircases: all the bloods of

the College, your honour will understand. About an hour before midnight the Master sent him to tell the gentlemen he could not sleep for the noise. After that it is not known just what happened, but the party had him in and gave him wine; and whether he went then and returned again when the company were gone is a question. Any way, he was found in the morning, cold and dead at the foot of the stairs, and his neck broken. It is said by some a trap was laid for him on the staircase. And if it was,' the man continued, after a pause, his true feeling finding sudden vent, 'it is a black shame that the law does not punish it! But the coroner brought it in an accident.'

Sir George shrugged his shoulders. Then, moved by curiosity and a desire to learn something about the girl, 'His daughter takes it hardly,' he said.

The man grunted. 'Ah,' he said, 'maybe she has need to. Your honour does not come from him?'

'From whom? I come from no one.'

'To be sure, sir, I was forgetting. But, seeing you with her—but there, you are a stranger.'

Soane would have liked to ask him his meaning, but he felt that he had condescended enough. He bade the man a curt good-night, therefore, and turning away passed quickly into St. Aldate's Street. Thence it was but a step to the Mitre, where he found his baggage and servant awaiting him.

In those days distinctions of dress were still clear and unmistakable. Between the peruke—often forty guineas' worth—the tie-wig, the scratch, and the man who went content with a little powder, the intervals were measurable. Ruffles cost five pounds a pair; and velvets and silks, cut probably in Paris, were morning wear. Moreover, the dress of the man who lost and won his thousand in a night at Almack's, and was as well known at Madame du Deffand's in Paris as at Holland House, differed as much from the dress of the ordinary well-to-do gentleman as that again differed from the lawyer's or the doctor's. The Mitre, therefore, saw in Sir George a very fine gentleman indeed, set him down to an excellent supper in its best room, and promised a post-chaise-and-four for the following morning—all, with much bowing and scraping, and much mention of my lord to whose house he would post. For in those days, if a fine gentleman was a very fine gentleman, a peer was also a peer. Quite recently they had ventured to hang one; but with apologies, a landau-and-six, and a silken halter.

Sir George would not have had the least pretension to be the glass of fashion and the mould of form, which some in St. James's Street considered him, if he had failed to give a large share of his thoughts while he supped to the beautiful woman he had quitted. He knew very well what steps Lord March or Tom Hervey would take, were either in his place; and though he had no greater taste for an irregular life than became a man in his station who was neither a Methodist nor Lord Radnor, he allowed his thoughts to dwell, perhaps longer than was prudent, on the girl's perfections, and on what might have been were his heart a little harder, or the not over-rigid rule which he observed a trifle less stringent. The father was dead. The girl was poor; probably her ideal of a gallant was a College beau, in second-hand lace and stained linen, drunk on ale in the forenoon. Was it likely that the fortress would hold out long, or that the maiden's heart would prove to be more obdurate than Danæe's?

Soane, considering these things and his self-denial, grew irritable over his Chambertin. He pictured Lord March's friend, the Rena, and found this girl immeasurably before her. He painted the sensation she would make and the fashion he could give her, and vowed that she was a Gunning with sense and wit added; and to sum up all, he blamed himself for a saint and a Scipio. Then, late as it was, he sent for the landlord, and to get rid of his thoughts, or in pursuance of them, inquired of that worthy if Mr. Thomasson was in residence at Pembroke.

'Yes, Sir George, he is,' the landlord answered; and asked if he should send for his reverence.

'No,' Soane commanded. 'If there is a chair to be had, I will go to him.'

'There is one below, at your honour's service. And the men are waiting.'

So Sir George, with the landlord lighting him and his man attending with his cloak, descended the stairs in state, entered the sedan, and was carried off to Pembroke.

CHAPTER III.

TUTOR AND PUPILS—OLD STYLE.

DOCTOR SAMUEL JOHNSON, of Johnson's Court, Fleet Street, had at this time some name in the world; but not to the pitch that persons entering Pembroke College hastened to pay reverence to

the second floor over the gateway, which he had vacated thirty years earlier. Their gaze, as a rule, rose no higher than the first-floor oriel, where the shapely white shoulder of a Parian statue, enhanced by a background of dark-blue silken hanging, caught the wandering eye. What this lacked of luxury and mystery was made up—almost to the Medmenham point in the eyes of the city—by the gleam of girandoles, and the glow, rather felt than seen, of Titian-copies in Florence frames. Sir George, borne along in his chair, peered up at this well-known window—well-known, since in the Oxford of 1767 a man's rooms were furnished if he had tables and chairs, store of beef and October, an apple-pie and Common Room port—and seeing the casement brilliantly lighted, smiled a trifle contemptuously.

'The Reverend Frederick is not much changed,' he muttered. 'Lord, what a beast it was! And how we hazed him! Ah? At home, is he?'—this to the servant, as the man lifted the head of the chair. 'Yes, I will go up.'

To tell the truth, the Reverend Frederick Thomasson had so keen a scent for a Gold Tuft, or anything akin to it, that it would have been strange if the instinct had not kept him at home; as a magnet, though unseen, attracts the needle. The same prepossession brought him, as soon as he heard of his visitor's approach, hurrying to the head of the stairs; where, if he had had his way, he would have clasped the baronet in his arms, slobbered over him, after the mode of Paris—for that was a trick of his—and perhaps even wept on his shoulder. But Soane, who knew his ways, coolly defeated the manœuvre by fending him off with his cane; and the Reverend Frederick was reduced to raising his eyes and hands to heaven in token of the joy which filled him at the sight of his old pupil.

'Lord! Sir George, I am inexpressibly happy!' he cried. 'My dear sir, my very dear sir, welcome to my poor rooms! This is joy indeed! Gaudeamus! Gaudeamus! To see you once more, fresh from the groves of Arthur's and the scenes of your triumphs! Pardon me, my dear sir, I must and will shake you by the hand again!' And succeeding at last in seizing Sir George's hand, he fondled and patted it in both of his—which were fat and white—the while with every mark of emotion he led him into the room.

'Gad!' said Sir George, standing and looking round. 'And where is she, Tommy?'

'That old name! What a pleasure it is to hear it!' cried the tutor, affecting to touch his eyes with the corner of a dainty handkerchief; as if the gratification he mentioned were too much for his feelings.

'But, seriously, Tommy, where is she?' Soane persisted, still looking round with a grin.

'My dear Sir George! My honoured friend! But you would always have your joke.'

'And, plainly, Tommy, is all this frippery yours?'

'Tut—tut!' Mr. Thomasson remonstrated. 'And no man with a finer taste! I have heard Mr. Walpole say that with a little training no man would excel Sir George Soane as a connoisseur. An exquisite eye! A nice discrimination! A——'

'Now, Tommy, to how many people have you said that?' Sir George retorted, dropping into a chair and coolly staring about him. 'But there, have done, and tell me about yourself. Who is the last sprig of nobility you have been training in the way it should go?'

'The last pupil who honoured me,' the Reverend Frederick answered, 'as you are so kind as to ask after my poor concerns, Sir George, was my Lord E——'s son. We went to Paris, Marseilles, Genoa, Florence; visited the mighty monuments of Rome, and came home by way of Venice, Milan, and Turin. I treasure the copy of Tintoretto which you see there, and these bronzes, as memorials of my lord's munificence. I brought them back with me.'

'And what did my lord's son bring back?' Sir George asked cruelly. 'A Midianitish woman?'

'My honoured friend!' Mr. Thomasson remonstrated. 'But your wit was always mordant—mordant! Too keen for us poor folk!'

'D'ye remember the inn at Cologne, Tommy?' Sir George continued, mischievously reminiscent. 'And Lord Tony arriving with his charmer? And you giving up your room to her? And the trick we played you at Calais, where we passed the little French dancer on you for Madame la Marquise de Personne?'

Mr. Thomasson winced, and a tinge of colour rose in his fat pale face. 'Boys, boys!' he said, with an airy gesture. 'You had an uncommon fancy even then, Sir George, though you were but a year from school! Ah, those were charming days! Great days!'

'And nights!' said Sir George, lying back in his chair and

looking at him with eyes half shut and insolence half veiled. 'Do you remember the faro bank at Florence, Tommy, and the three hundred livres you lost to that old harridan, Lady Harrington? Pearls cast before swine you styled them, I remember.'

'Lord! Sir George,' Mr. Thomasson cried, vastly horrified. 'How can you say such a thing? Your excellent memory plays you false.'

'It does,' said Soane, smiling sardonically. 'I remember. It was seed sown for the harvest, you called it—in your liquor. And that touches me. Do you mind the night Fitzhugh made you so prodigiously drunk at Bonn, Tommy? And we put you in the kneading-trough, and the servants found you and shifted you to the horse-trough? Gad! you would have died of laughter if you could have seen yourself when we rescued you, lank and dripping, and with your wig like a sponge!'

'It must have been—uncommonly diverting!' the Reverend Frederick stammered; and he smiled widely, but with a lack of heart. This time there could be no doubt of the pinkness that overspread his face.

'Diverting? I tell you it would have made old Radnor laugh!' Sir George said bluntly.

'Ha, ha! Perhaps it would. Perhaps it would. Not that I—have the honour of his lordship's acquaintance.'

'No? Well, he would not suit you, Tommy. I would not seek it.'

The Reverend Frederick looked doubtful, as weighing the possibility of anything that bore the name of lord being alien from him. From this reflection, however, he was roused by a new sally on Soane's part. 'But, crib me! you are very fine to-night, Mr. Thomasson,' said he, staring about him afresh. 'Ten o'clock, and you are lighted as for a drum! What is afoot?'

The tutor smirked and rubbed his hands. 'Well, I—I was expecting a visitor, Sir George.'

'Ah, you dog! She is not here, but you are expecting her.'

Mr. Thomasson grinned; the jest flattered him. Nevertheless he hastened to exonerate himself. 'It is not Venus I am expecting, but Mars,' he said with a simper. 'The Honourable Mr. Dunborough, son to my Lord Dunborough; and the same whose meritorious services at the Havanna you, my dear friend, doubtless remember. He is now cultivating in peace the gifts which in war——'

'Sufficed to keep him out of danger!' said Sir George bluntly. 'So he is your last sprig, is he? He should be well seasoned.'

'He is four-and-twenty,' Mr. Thomasson answered, pluming himself and speaking in his softest tones. 'And the most charming, I assure you, the most debonair of men. But do I hear a noise?'

'Yes,' said Sir George, listening. 'I hear something.'

Mr. Thomasson rose. 'What—what is it, I wonder?' he said, a trifle nervously. A dull sound, as of a hive of bees stirred to anger, was becoming audible.

'Devil if I know!' Sir George answered. 'Open the window.'

But the Reverend Frederick, after approaching the window with the intention of doing so, seemed disinclined to go nearer, and hovered about it. 'Really,' he said, no longer hiding his discomposure, 'I fear that it is something—something in the nature of a riot. I fear that that which I anticipated has happened. If my noble friend had only taken my advice and remained here!' And he wrung his hands without disguise.

'Why, what has he to do with it?' Soane asked curiously.

'He—he had an accident the other night,' Mr. Thomasson answered. 'A monstrous nuisance for him. He and his noble friend, Lord Almeric Doyley, played a little trick on a—on one of the College servants. The clumsy fellow—it is marvellous how awkward that class of persons is—fell down the stairs and hurt himself; and now there is a kind of feeling about it in the town. I persuaded Mr. Dunborough to take up his quarters here for the night, but he is so spirited he would dine abroad. Now I fear, I really fear he may be in trouble!'

'If it is he they are hooting in St. Aldate's,' Sir George answered drily, 'I should say he was in trouble! But in my time the gownsmen would have sallied out and brought him off before this. And given those yelpers a cracked crown or two!'

The roar of voices in the narrow streets was growing clearer and more threatening. 'Ye-es?' said the Reverend Frederick, moving about the room, distracted between his anxiety and his respect for his companion. 'Perhaps so. But there is a monstrous low, vulgar set in College nowadays; a man of spirit has no chance with them. Yesterday they had the insolence to break into my noble friend's rooms and throw his furniture out of window! And, I vow, would have gone on to— but Lord! this is frightful!

What a shocking howling ! My dear Sir, my very dear Sir George,' Mr. Thomasson continued, his voice tremulous and his fat cheeks grown on a sudden loose and flabby, 'do you think that there is any danger?'

'Danger?' said Sir George with cruel relish—he had gone to the window, and was looking out. 'Well, I should say that Madam Venus there would certainly have to stand shot. If you are wise you will put out some of those candles. They are entering the lane now. Gad, Tommy, if they think your lad of spirit is here, I would not give much for your window-glass!'

Mr. Thomasson, who had hastened to take the advice and had extinguished all the candles but one, thus reducing the room to partial darkness, wrung his hands and moaned for answer. 'Where are the proctors?' he said. 'Where are the constables? Where are the—— Oh, dear, dear, this is dreadful!'

And certainly, even in a man of firmer courage a little trepidation might have been pardoned. As the unseen crowd, struggling and jostling, poured from the roadway of St. Aldate's into the narrow confines of Pembroke Lane, the sound of its hooting gathered sudden volume, and from an intermittent murmur, as of a remote sea, swelled in a moment into a roar of menace. And as a mob is capable of deeds from which the members who compose it would severally shrink, as nothing is so pitiless, nothing so unreasoning, so in the sound of its voice is a note that appals all but the hardiest. Soane was no coward. A year before he had been present at the siege of Bedford House by the Spitalfields weavers, where swords were drawn and much blood was spilled, while the gentlemen of the clubs and coffee-houses looked on as at a play; but even he felt a slackening of the pulse as he listened. And with the Reverend Frederick it was different. He was not framed for danger. When the smoking glare of the links which the ringleaders carried began to dance and flicker on the opposite houses, he looked about him with a wild eye, and had already taken two steps towards the door, when it opened.

It admitted two men about Sir George's age, or a little younger. One, after glancing round, passed hurriedly to the window and looked out; the other sank into the nearest chair, and, fanning himself with his hat, muttered a querulous oath.

'My dear lord!' cried the Reverend Frederick, hastening to his side—and it is noteworthy that he forgot even his panic in the old habit of reverence—'What an escape! To think that a life

so valuable as your lordship's should lie at the mercy of those wretches! I shudder at the thought of what might have happened.'

'Fan me, Tommy,' was the answer. And Lord Almeric, an excessively pale, excessively thin young man, handed his hat with a gesture of infinite exhaustion to the obsequious tutor. 'Fan me, that is a good soul. Positively I am suffocated with the smell of those creatures! Worse than horses, I assure you. There, again! What a pother about a common fellow! 'Pon honour, I don't know what the world is coming to!'

'Nor I,' Mr. Thomasson answered, hanging over him with assiduity and concern on his countenance. 'It is not to be comprehended.'

'No, 'pon honour it is not!' my lord agreed. And then, feeling a little recovered, 'Dunborough,' he asked, 'what are they doing?'

'Hanging you, my dear fellow!' the other answered from the window; where he had taken his place within a pace of Soane, but without discovering him. He spoke in the full boisterous tone of one in perfect health and spirits, perfectly satisfied with himself, and perfectly heedless of others.

'Hem, hem! you are joking?' my lord answered. 'Hanging me? Oh, ah! I see. In effigy!'

'And your humble servant,' said Mr. Dunborough. 'I tell you, Tommy, we had a near run for it. Curse their impudence, they made us sweat. For a very little I would give the rascals something to howl for.'

Perhaps he meant no more than to put a bold face on it before his creatures. But unluckily the rabble, which had come provided with a cart and gallows, a hangman, and a paunchy, red-faced fellow in canonicals, and hitherto had busied itself with arranging the mock execution, found leisure at this moment to look up at the window. Catching sight of the object of their anger, they vented their rage in a roar of execration, so much louder than all that had gone before that it brought the sentence which Mr. Thomasson was uttering to a quivering end. But the demonstration, far from intimidating Mr. Dunborough, provoked him to fury. Turning from the sea of brandished hands and upturned faces, he strode to a table, and in a moment returned. The window was open, he flung it wider, and stood erect, in full view of the mob.

The sight produced a momentary silence, of which he took

advantage. 'Now, you tailors, begone!' he cried harshly. 'To your hovels, and leave gentlemen to their wine, or it will be the worse for you. Come, march! We have had enough of your fooling, and are tired of it.'

The answer was a shout of 'Cain!' and 'Murderer!' One voice cried 'Ferrers!' and this caught the fancy of the crowd. In a moment a hundred were crying, 'Ay, Ferrers! Come down, and we'll Ferrers you!'

He stood a moment irresolute, glaring at them; then something struck and shattered a pane of the window beside him, and the fetid smell of a bad egg filled the room. At the sound Mr. Thomasson uttered a cry and shrank farther into the darkness, while Lord Almeric rose hastily and looked about for a refuge. But Mr. Dunborough did not flinch.

'D—n you, you rascals, you will have it, will you?' he cried; and in the darkness a sharp click was heard. He raised his hand. A shriek in the street below answered the movement; some who stood nearest saw that he held a pistol and gave the information to others, and there was a wild rush to escape. But before the hammer dropped, a hand closed on his, and Scane, crying, 'Are you mad, sir?' dragged him back.

Dunborough had not entertained the least idea that any one stood near him; and the surprise was as complete as the check. After an instinctive attempt to wrench away his hand, he stood glaring at the person who held him. 'Curse you!' he said. 'Who are you? And what do you mean?'

'Not to sit by and see murder done,' Sir George answered firmly. 'To-morrow you will thank me.'

'For the present I'll thank you to release my hand,' the other retorted in a freezing tone. Nevertheless, Sir George thought that the delay had sobered him, and complied. 'Much obliged to you,' Dunborough continued. 'Now perhaps you will walk into the next room, where there is a light, and we can be free from that scum.'

Mr. Thomasson had set the example of a prudent retreat thither; and Lord Almeric, with a feeble, 'Lord, this is very surprising! But I think that the gentleman is right, Dunny,' was hovering in the doorway. Sir George signed to Mr. Dunborough to go first, but he would not, and Scane, shrugging his shoulders, preceded him.

The room into which they all crowded was no more than a closet,

containing a dusty bureau propped on three legs, a few books, and Mr. Thomasson's robes, boots, and wig-stand. It was so small that when they were all in it, they stood perforce close together, and had the air of persons sheltering from a storm. This nearness, the glare of the lamp on their faces, and the mean surroundings gave a kind of added force to Mr. Dunborough's rage. For a moment after entering he could not speak; he had dined largely, and sat long after dinner, and his face was suffused with blood. But then, 'Tommy, who is—this—fellow?' he cried, blurting out the words as if each must be the last.

'Good heavens!' cried the tutor, shocked at the low appellation. 'Mr. Dunborough! Mr. Dunborough! You mistake. My dear sir, my dear friend, you do not understand. This is Sir George Soane, whose name must be known to you. Permit me to introduce him.'

'Then take that for a meddler and a coxcomb, Sir George Soane!' cried the angry man; and quick as thought he struck Sir George, who was at elbows with him, lightly in the face.

Sir George stepped back, his face crimson. 'You are not sober, sir!' he said.

'Is not that enough?' cried the other, drowning both Mr. Thomasson's exclamation of horror and Lord Almeric's protest of, 'Oh, but I say, you know——' under the volume of his voice. 'You have a sword, sir, and I suppose you know how to use it. If there is not space here, there is a room below, and I am at your service. You will not wipe that off by rubbing it!' he added coarsely.

Sir George dropped his hand from his face as if it stung him. 'Mr. Dunborough,' he said, trembling—but it was with passion, 'if I thought you were sober and would not repent to-morrow what you have done to-night——'

'You would do fine things,' Dunborough retorted. 'Come, sir, a truce to your impertinence! You have meddled with me, and you must maintain it. Must I strike you again?'

'I will not meet you to-night,' Sir George answered firmly. 'I will be neither Lord Byron nor his victim. These gentlemen will bear me out so far. For the rest, if you are of the same mind to-morrow, it will be for me and not for you to ask a meeting.'

'At your service, sir,' Mr. Dunborough said, with a sarcastic bow. 'But suppose, to save trouble in the morning, we fix time and place now.'

‘Eight—in Magdalen Fields,’ Soane answered curtly. ‘If I do not hear from you, I am staying at the Mitre Inn. Mr. Thomasson, I bid you good-night. My lord, your servant.’

And with that, and though Mr. Thomasson, wringing his hands over what had occurred and the injury to himself that might come of it, attempted some feeble remonstrances, Sir George bowed sternly, took his hat, and went down. He found his chair at the foot of the stairs, but in consideration of the crowd he would not use it. The College porters, indeed, pressed him to wait, and demurred to opening even the wicket. But he had carried forbearance to the verge, and dreaded the least appearance of timidity; and, insisting, got his way. The rabble admired so fine a gentleman, and so resolute a bearing, gave place to him with a jest, and let him pass unmolested down the lane.

It was well that they did, for he had come to the end of his patience. One man steps out of a carriage, picks up a handkerchief, and lives to wear a crown. Another takes the same step; it lands him in a low squabble from which he may extricate himself with safety, but scarcely with an accession of credit. Sir George belonged to the inner circle of fashion, to which neither rank, nor wealth, nor parts, nor power, of necessity admitted. In the sphere in which he moved, men seldom quarrelled and as seldom fought. Of easiest habit among themselves, they left bad manners and the duello to political adventurers and cubbish peers, or to the gentlemen of the quarter sessions and the local ordinary. It was with a mighty disgust, therefore, that Sir George considered alike the predicament into which a caprice had hurried him, and the insufferable young Hector whom fate had made his antagonist. They would laugh at White’s. They would make a jest of it over the cakes and fruit at Betty’s. Selwyn would turn a quip. And yet the thing was beyond a joke. He must be a target first and a butt afterwards—if any afterwards there were.

As he entered the Mitre, sick with chagrin, and telling himself he might have known that something of this kind would come of stooping to vulgar company, he bethought him—for the first time in an hour—of the girl. ‘Lord!’ he said, thinking of her request, her passion, and her splendid eyes; and he stood. For the *âge des philosophes*, destiny seemed to be taking too large a part in the play. This must be the very man with whom she had striven to embroil him!

His servant’s voice broke in on his thoughts. ‘At what hour

will your honour please to be called?' he asked, as he carried off the laced coat and wig.

Soane stifled a groan. 'Called?' he said. 'At half-past six. Don't stare, booby! Half-past six, I said. And do you go now, I'll shift for myself. But first put out my despatch-case, and see there is pen and ink. It's done? Then be off, and when you come in the morning bring the landlord and another with you.'

The man lingered. 'Will your honour want horses?' he said.

'I don't know. Yes! No! Well, not until noon. And where is my sword?'

'I was taking it down to dust it, sir.'

'Then don't take it; I will look to it myself. And mind you, call me at the time I said.'

CHAPTER IV.

PEEPING TOM OF WALLINGFORD.

To be an attorney-at-law, avid of practice and getting none; to be called Peeping Tom of Wallingford, in the place where you are fain to trot about, busy and respected; to be the sole support of an old mother, and to be come almost to the toe of the stocking—these circumstances might seem to indicate an existence and prospects bare, not to say arid. Eventually they presented themselves in that light to the person most nearly concerned—by name, Mr. Peter Fishwick; and, moving him to grasp at the forlorn hope presented by a vacant stewardship at one of the colleges, brought him by coach to Oxford. There he spent three days and his penultimate guineas in canvassing, begging, bowing, and smirking; and on the fourth, which happened to be the very day of Sir George's arrival in the city, was duly and handsomely defeated without the honour of a vote.

Mr. Fishwick had expected no other result; and so far all was well. But he had a mother, and that mother entertained a fond belief that local jealousy and nothing else kept down her son in the place of his birth. She had built high hopes on this expedition; she had thought that the Oxford gentlemen would be prompt to recognise his merit; and for her sake the sharp-featured lawyer went back to the Mitre a rueful man. He had taken a lodging

there with intent to dazzle the town, and not because his means were equal to it; and already the bill weighed upon him. By nature as cheerful a gossip as ever wore a scratch wig and lived to be inquisitive, he sat mum through the evening, and barely listened while the landlord talked big of his guest upstairs, his curricule and fashion, the sums he lost at White's, and the plate in his dressing-case.

Nevertheless the lawyer would not have been Peter Fishwick if he had not presently felt the stirrings of curiosity, or, thus incited, failed to be on the move between the stairs and the landing when Sir George came in and passed up. The attorney's ears were as sharp as a ferret's nose, and he was notably long in lighting his humble dip at a candle which by chance stood outside Sir George's door. Hence it came about that Soane—who after dismissing his servant had gone for a moment into the adjacent chamber—heard a slight noise in the room he had left; and, returning quickly to learn what it was, found no one, but observed the outer door shake as if some one tried it. His suspicions aroused, he was still staring at the door when it moved again, opened a very little way, and before his astonished eyes admitted a small man in a faded black suit, who, as soon as he had squeezed himself in, stood bowing with a kind of desperate audacity.

'Hallo!' said Sir George, staring anew. 'What do you want, my man?'

The intruder advanced a pace or two, and nervously crumpled his hat in his hands. 'If your honour pleases,' he said, a smile feebly propitiative appearing in his face, 'I shall be glad to be of service to you.'

'Of service—to me?' said Sir George, staring in perplexity.

'In the way of my profession,' the little man answered, fixing Sir George with two eyes as bright as birds'; which eyes somewhat redeemed his small keen features. 'Your honour was about to make your will.'

'My will?' Sir George cried, amazed; 'I was about to——' and then in an outburst of rage, 'and if I was—what the devil business is it of yours?' he cried. 'And who are you, sir?'

The little man spread out his hands in deprecation. 'I?' he said. 'I am an attorney, sir, and everybody's business is my business.'

Sir George gasped. 'You are an attorney!' he cried. 'And

—and everybody's business is your business! By God, this is too much!' And seizing the bell-rope he was about to overwhelm the man of law with a torrent of abuse, before having him put out, when the absurdity of the appeal and perhaps a happy touch in Peter's last answer struck him; he held his hand, and hesitated. Then, 'What is your name, sir?' he said sternly.

'Peter Fishwick,' the attorney answered humbly.

'And how the devil did you know—that I wanted to make a will?'

'I was going upstairs,' the lawyer explained. 'And the door was ajar.'

'And you listened?'

'I wanted to hear,' said Peter with simplicity.

'But what did you hear, sir?' Soane retorted, scarcely able to repress a smile.

'I heard your honour tell your servant to lay out pen and paper, and to bring the landlord and another upstairs when he called you in the morning. And I heard you bid him leave your sword. And putting two and two together, respected sir,' Peter continued manfully, 'and knowing that it is only of a will you need three witnesses, I said to myself, being an attorney——'

'And everybody's business being your business,' Sir George muttered irritably.

'To be sure, sir—it is a will, I said, he is for making. And with your honour's leave,' Peter concluded with spirit, 'I'll make it.'

'Confound your impudence,' Sir George answered, and stared at him, marvelling at the little man's shrewdness.

Peter smiled in a sickly fashion. 'If your honour would but allow me,' he said; he saw a great chance slipping from him, and his voice was plaintive.

It moved Sir George to compassion. 'Where is your practice?' he asked ungraciously.

The attorney felt a surprising inclination to candour. 'At Wallingford,' he said, 'it should be. But——' and there he stopped, shrugging his shoulders, and leaving the rest unsaid.

'Can you make a will?' Sir George retorted.

'No man better,' said Peter with confidence; and on the instant he drew a chair to the table, seized the pen, and bent the nib on his thumbnail; then he said briskly, 'I wait your commands, sir.'

Sir George stared in some embarrassment—he had not expected to be taken so literally; but, after a moment's hesitation, reflecting that to write down his wishes with his own hand would give him more trouble, and that he might as well trust this stranger as that, he accepted the situation. 'Take down what I wish, then,' he said. 'Put it into form afterwards, and bring it to me when I rise. Can you be secret?'

'Try me,' said Peter with enthusiasm. 'For a good client I would bite off my tongue.'

'Very well, then, listen!' Sir George said. And presently, after some humming and thinking, 'I wish to leave all my real property to the eldest son of my uncle, Anthony Soane,' he continued.

'Right, sir. Child already in existence, I presume? Not that it is absolutely necessary,' the attorney continued glibly. 'But——'

'I do not know,' said Sir George.

'Ah!' said the lawyer, raising his pen and knitting his brows while he looked very learnedly into vacancy. 'The child is expected, but you have not yet heard, sir, that——'

'I know nothing about the child, nor whether there is a child,' Sir George answered testily. 'My uncle may be dead, unmarried, or alive and married—what difference does it make?'

'Certainty is very necessary in these things,' Peter replied severely. The pen in his hand, he became a different man. 'Your uncle, Mr. Anthony Soane, as I understand is alive?'

'He disappeared in the rebellion in '45,' Sir George reluctantly explained, 'was disinherited in favour of my father, sir, and has not since been heard from.'

The attorney grew rigid with alertness; he was like nothing so much as a dog, expectant at a rat-hole. 'Attainted?' he said.

'No!' said Sir George.

'Outlawed?'

'No.'

The attorney collapsed: no rat in the hole. 'Dear me, dear me, what a sad story!' he said; and then, remembering that his client had profited, 'but out of evil—ahem! As I understand, sir, you wish all your real property, including the capital mansion house and demesne, to go to the eldest son of your uncle Mr. Anthony Soane in tail, remainder to the second son in

tail, and, failing sons, to daughters—the usual settlement in a word, sir.’

‘Yes.’

‘No exceptions, sir.’

‘None.’

‘Very good, sir,’ the attorney answered with the air of a man satisfied so far. ‘And failing issue of your uncle? To whom then, Sir George?’

‘To the Earl of Chatham.’

Mr. Fishwick jumped in his seat; then bowed profoundly.

‘Indeed! Indeed! How very interesting!’ he murmured under his breath. ‘Very remarkable! Very remarkable, and flattering.’

Sir George stooped to explain. ‘I have no near relations,’ he said shortly. ‘Lord Chatham—Mr. Pitt, he then was—was the executor of my grandfather’s will, is connected with me by marriage, and at one time acted as my guardian.’

Mr. Fishwick licked his lips as if he tasted something very good. This was business indeed! These were names with a vengeance! His face shone with satisfaction; he acquired a sudden stiffness of the spine. ‘Very good, sir,’ he said. ‘Ve—ry good,’ he said. ‘In fee simple, I understand?’

‘Yes.’

‘Precisely. Precisely; no uses or trusts? No. Unnecessary of course. Then as to personalty, Sir George?’

‘A legacy of five hundred guineas to George Augustus Selwyn, Esquire, of Matson, Gloucestershire. One of the same amount to Sir Charles Bunbury, Baronet. Five hundred guineas to each of my executors; and to each of these four a mourning ring.’

‘Certainly, sir. All very noble gifts!’ And Mr. Fishwick smacked his lips.

For a moment Sir George looked his offence; then seeing that the attorney’s ecstasy was real and unaffected, he smiled. ‘To my land-steward two hundred guineas,’ he said; ‘to my house-steward one hundred guineas, to the housekeeper at Estcombe an annuity of twenty guineas. Ten guineas and a suit of mourning to each of my upper servants not already mentioned, and the rest of my personalty—’

‘After payment of debts and funeral and testamentary expenses,’ the lawyer murmured, writing busily.

Sir George started at the words, and stared thoughtfully before him : he was silent so long that the lawyer recalled his attention by gently repeating, 'And the residue, honoured sir?'

'To the Thatched House Society for the relief of small debtors,' Sir George answered, between a sigh and a smile. And added, 'They will not gain much by it, poor devils!'

Mr. Fishwick with a rather downcast air noted the bequest. 'And that is all, sir, I think?' he said with his head on one side. 'Except the appointment of executors.'

'No,' Sir George answered curtly. 'It is not all. Take this down and be careful. As to the trust fund of fifty thousand pounds'—the attorney gasped, and his eyes shone as he seized the pen anew. 'Take this down carefully, man, I say—As to the trust fund left by my grandfather's will to my uncle Anthony Soane or his heirs conditionally on his or their returning to their allegiance and claiming it within the space of twenty-one years from the date of his will, the interest in the meantime to be paid to me for my benefit, and the principal sum, failing such return, to become mine as fully as if it had vested in me from the beginning—'

'Ah!' said the attorney, scribbling fast, and with distended cheeks.

'I leave the said fund to go with the land.'

'To go with the land,' the lawyer repeated as he wrote the words. 'Fifty thousand pounds! Prodigious! Prodigious! Might I ask, sir, the date of your respected grandfather's will?'

'December 1747,' Sir George answered.

'The term has then nine months to run?'

'Yes.'

'With submission, then it comes to this,' the lawyer answered thoughtfully, marking off the points with his pen in the air. 'In the event of—of this will operating—all, or nearly all, Sir George, goes to your uncle's heirs in tail—if to be found—and failing issue of his body to my Lord Chatham?'

'Those are my intentions.'

'Precisely, sir,' the lawyer answered, glancing at the clock. 'And they shall be carried out. But—ahem! Do I understand, sir, that in the event of a claimant making good his claim before the expiration of the nine months, you stand to lose this stupendous, this magnificent sum—even in your lifetime?'

'I do,' said Sir George grimly. 'But there will be enough left to pay your bill.'

Peter stretched out his hands, then, feeling that this was unprofessional, seized the pen. 'Will you please to honour me with the names of the executors, sir?' he said.

'Dr. Addington, of Harley Street.'

'Yes, sir.'

'And Mr. Dagge, of Lincoln's Inn Fields, attorney-at-law.'

'It is an honour to be in any way associated with him,' the lawyer muttered as he wrote the name with a flourish. 'His lordship's man of business, I believe. And now you may have your mind at ease, sir,' he continued. 'I will put this into form before I sleep, and will wait on you for your signature—shall I say at—'

'At a quarter before eight,' said Scane. 'You will be private?'

'Of course, sir. It is my business to be private. I wish you a very good night.'

Peter longed to refer to the coming meeting, and to his sincere hope that his new patron would leave the ground unscathed. But a duel was so alien from the lawyer's walk in life, that he knew nothing of the punctilios, and he felt a delicacy. Tamely to wish a man a safe issue seemed to be a common compliment incommensurate with the occasion; and a bathos. So, after a moment of hesitation, he gathered up his papers, and tip-toed out of the room with an absurd exaggeration of respect, and a heart bounding jubilant under his flapped waistcoat.

Left to himself, Sir George heaved a sigh, and, resting his head on his hand, stared long and gloomily at the candles. 'Well, better be run through by this clown,' he muttered after a while, 'than live to put a pistol to my own head like Mountford and Bland. Or Scarborough, or poor Bolton. It is not likely, and I wish that little pettifogger had not put it into my head; but if a cousin were to appear now, or before the time is up, I should be in Queer Street. Estcombe is dipped: and of the money I raised, there is no more at the agent's than I have lost in a night at Quinze! D——n White's and that is all about it. And d——n it, I shall, and finely if old Anthony's lad turn up and sweep off the three thousand a year that is left! Umph, if I am to have a steady hand to-morrow I must get to bed. What unholy chance brought me into this scrape?'

(To be continued.)

